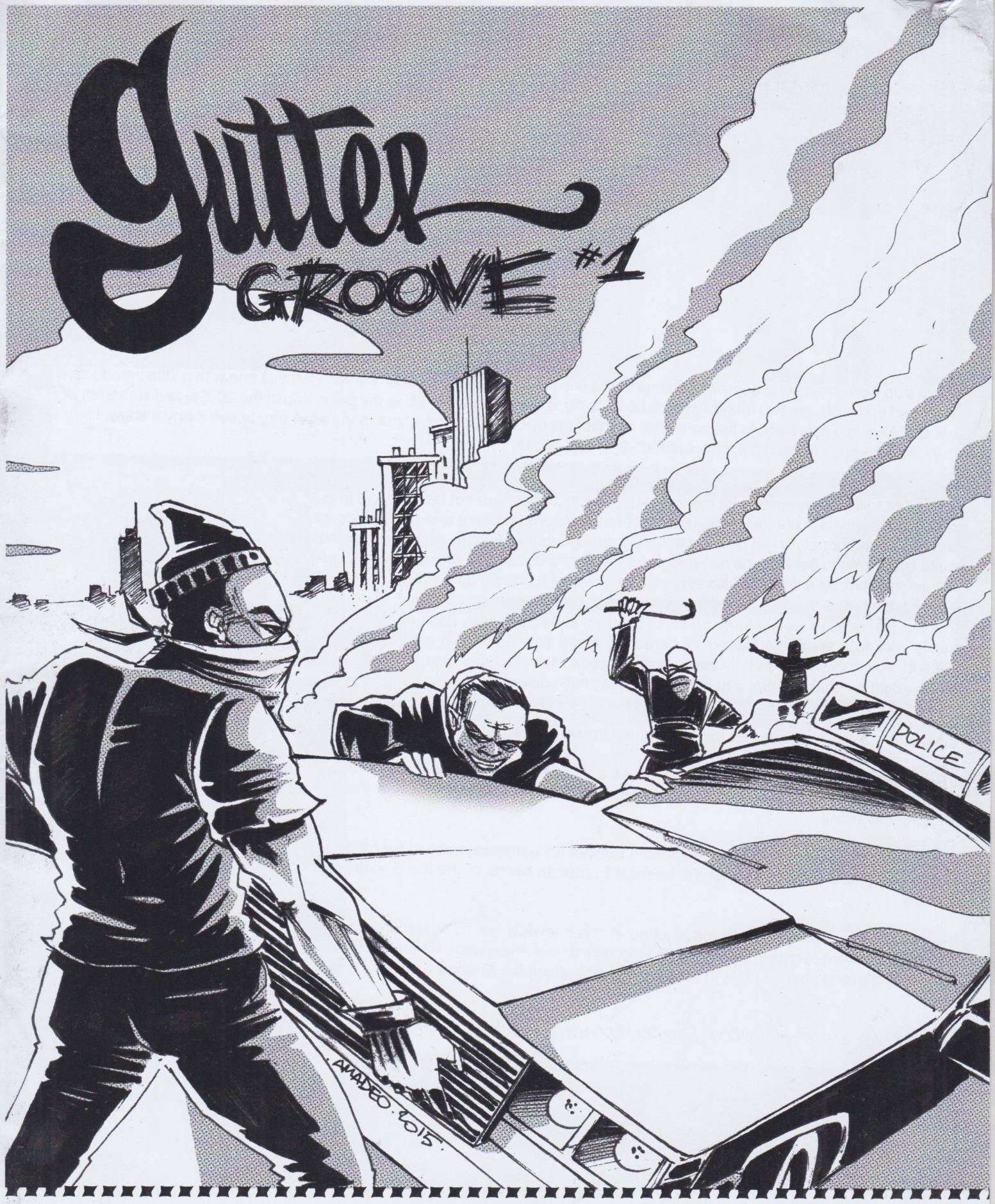


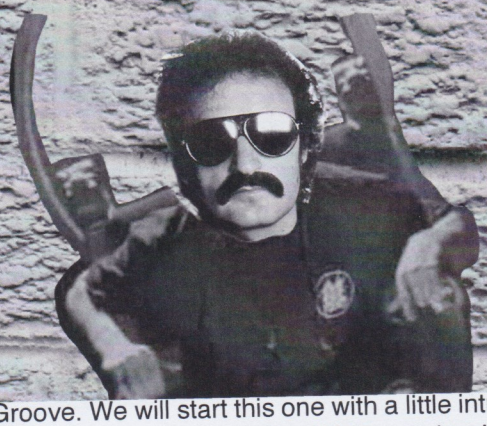
NEXT STEP UP

REDEMPTION DENIED

xrepentancex

JORGE MORODER VS GEORGIO MERAUDER





What's up Core ladies and gents? Welcome to the first issue of Gutter Groove. We will start this one with a little introduction. We, Fred and Nico, are two friends who've been going to shows together since the beginning of the 2000s, and we've felt like we should give a little back to the core after all that time trooping up throughout many a country to see many a show. Here's our own little prick on the wall, our contribution to this scene.

We're not trying to compete with the internet, our little fingers are not fast enough to put out a zine everyday. We just want just to put forward some present and past bands we really like, and hopefully get people interested enough to check them out. Now it took us quite some time to get this one out, and we're not gonna bother you with the details. I just wanna say that we did this to also express our views of hardcore as a whole.

For our first release we got three bands of different styles, since we don't really stick to a specific subgenre of hardcore. And if you're the kind of person who only listens to holy terror or youth crew revival all day long, there might be chances that you have a little psychotic disorder.

Aaaaaand..... the nominees for the first Gutter Groove Golden Grammy Globe are :

X Repentance X - when vegan militance means a bit more than uploading a picture of your last vegan curry tofu. Discussion with Patrick, an hyperactive member of the UK hardcore scene.

Redemption Denied – Keeping Benelux as a hotspot for hardcore, not just for fried potatoes and hooliganism. One of the freshest European bands of the last 5 years for sure.

Next Step Up – Some of the topics touched in this interview got new headlines in views of the recent events in Baltimore. We discussed everything with JR from the LA 92 riots to growing up as a punk in the 80's and embracing the Krishna ways.

Sincerely, your devoted Gutter Groove crew.

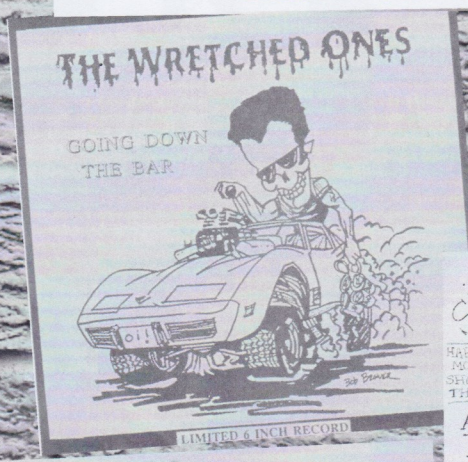


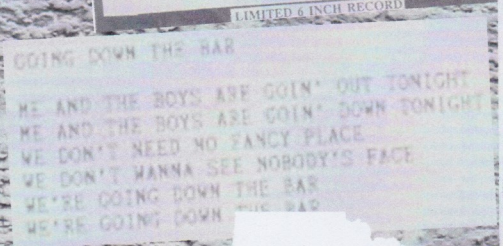


TOPS OF THE POP

Top 5 hardcore songs about drinking:

Blood 4 Blood - Goin' Down The Bar (The Wretched Ones cover)
Slumlords - Drunk At The Youth Of Today Reunion Show
No Redeeming Social Value - New 64
Breakdown - Tomorrow Fades Away
Subzero - The Guiness Song

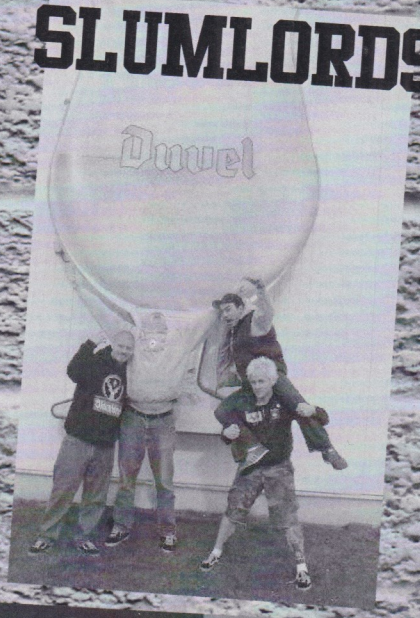




Top 5 straight-edge anthems:

Project X - Straight Edge Revenge
Project X - Straight Edge Revenge
Project X - Straight Edge Revenge
Project X - Straight Edge Revenge
Project X - Straight Edge Revenge





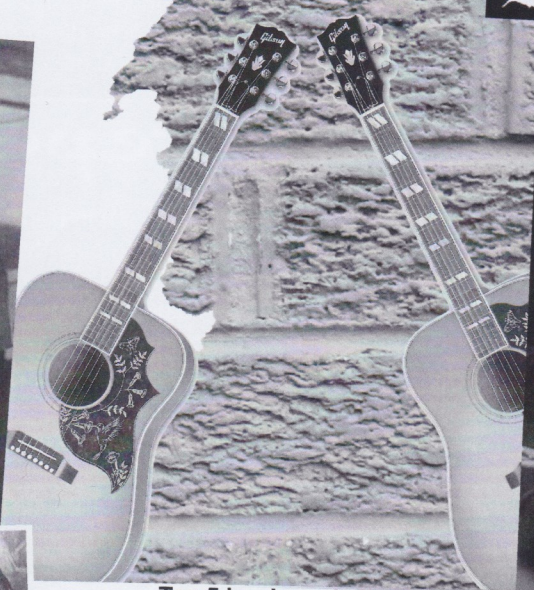


Top 5 French hate:

Purgatory - Inner Side
Kickback - No One Gets Out Alive
A.W.O.L. - Ominous Prelude To Destruction
Drowning - Spore No Flesh
Count To React - This Hate







Top 5 hardcore ballads:

Krutch - Can't Move
The Killer - All For Sale
Deal With It - Synthia
Twitching Tongues - Loveless Nightmare
Fury Of Five - Seasons Change



XREPENTANCEX

XREPENTANCEX

XREPENTANCEX

XREPENTANCEX

Here at Gutter Groove, we have a special fondness for 90's vegan straight edge hardcore, and bands like Raid or Day Of Suffering get regular plays.

If you're on a steady diet of Japanese vegancore, and missing the good ole' days when Arkangel and the Legion Roma bands where reigning over Europe, you should rejoice, because Repentance is just what you need to get pumped up. Guitarist Patrick Hassan answered our questions, read on !

What gave you the idea to bring back a style that was more or less left for dead, European Edge-metal ?

X REPENTANCEX XREPENTANCEX

It's a style we all appreciate and grew up listening to. I have wanted to do a band in that vein for a number of years but couldn't find appropriate members. It all came together when Charlie (Abolition/Violent Reaction) introduced me (Pat) to Oli (drums) and we started putting together some songs.

Of course bands like Arkangel and Reprisal, as well as 90's vegan metalcore bands such as Day of Suffering, come to mind when earing your music, what would be some of the less obvious influences on your sound ?

You hit the nail on the head with DoS. They are a huge influence, as well as the two European bands you mentioned. I guess some of the (perhaps) less obvious influences would be Slayer, Turmoil, Abnegation, Strongarm, Dissection, At The Gates, Obituary. We all listen to a bunch of different stuff, which helps.



"men are the devils of the earth, and the animals are the tormented souls"

You dropped 2 songs from your future LP on the internet some months back, which are pretty much in the line of the 7", but better produced. Anything specific we can expect from that album ?

The LP songs retain that H8000 vibe but I think the songs are generally a lot faster. We tried to keep things interesting by trying some new things too. Fans of the old stuff won't be disappointed but I think it might appeal to a more general metal audience as well.

XREPENTANCEX XREPENT

Your 7" is called In Violation Of Aša, which is a reference to old persian mythology, and you actuall refer to that in the lyrics of the title song, would you care to elaborate about the meaning of it ?

xrepentancex

Aša is indeed a term in Zoroastrianism (but has its conceptual roots in pre-Zoroastrian Iranian ideology as well). It is usually translated as "truth" or "order", which is relevant to a number of contexts, most frequently moral contexts. As with all religious terminology in the lyrics, it is used for emphasis only. The title of the 7" is meant to reflect our view that mankind is in 'violation' of certain moral principles we think are important: for example, respect for the natural world and the lives which fall within it.

This style of hardcore was always accompanied by ultra-militant lyrics, do you think people are being receptive to your message as well, not only to the music ?

xrepentancex

It seems to be the case. A lot of people have said that they have reconsidered their diet or habits due to the band, which is overwhelming. It isn't necessarily the aim of the band to do this, rather to vent aggression at issues in a constructive way. But if people have taken something positive from it then that's cool. Likewise, if people just enjoy the music and have a good time then that's cool too.

One of your t-shirt is a rip-off from Statement (UK hardline band). Do you feel close to the hardline ideology or was it just a wink to a band you musically liked?



As with a lot of other things regarding xRepentancex, it is more paying homage to a band, or bands, that have influenced us or were innovators in one way or another. We all love 90s hard-core and a bunch of hardline bands. But as for ideology, I think I speak for us all when I say hardline was fairly repulsive in a number of ways. We certainly do not share their damning social views about homosexuality, or their rigid teleology.

That being said, hardline bands did a lot for hardcore and for veganism at an interesting time, and a lot of people who used to associate with the movement are good friends of mine. So when we did the Statement rip, or use words like 'Jihad' or 'Fatwa' in lyrics, I am assuming people are already familiar with the circle of bands we are heavily influenced by and therefore understand the tongue in cheek/respectful 'nod' we are giving by making the reference.

xrepentancex

I realize, it will perhaps go over some younger/newer people's heads, and they may get bent out of shape about it. But it's not our job to give people a history lesson. We are just having fun doing a hardcore band. Besides, hardcore shouldn't be a protective social clique. It is meant to push boundaries and provoke, so if someone gets pissed off about our lyrics then I guess it just means we are doing something right! No apologies.

To some extent, the UK is known for it's drinking and drugs culture. How is straight-edge perceived in the UK outside the hardcore scene ? And is-it well accepted, or more marginal inside the scene ?

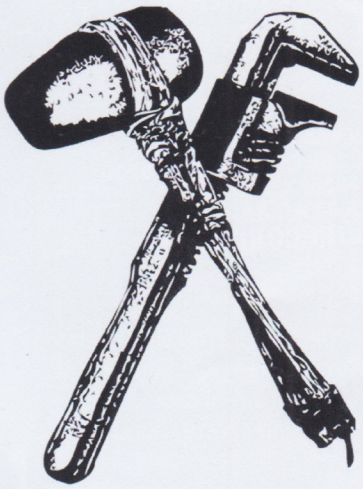
xrepentancex

I think Straight Edge is not really familiar to the average person on the streets of the UK, and I want to keep it that way. It's not for everyone, it's not a movement where we want to increase our numbers. It's a very specific way of saying 'fuck you' to what are seen as redundant or hindering cultural practices. Inside the UK scene it is very well represented now. We have great sxe bands like Obstruct, Violent Reaction, Guidance, Breaking Point, etc. But simply 'not drinking' is still pretty uncommon in mainstream culture, especially in the youth. I think it's quite hard to deal with peer pressure for some people. Drinking is deeply embedded in British culture.

I know your guitarist Patrick is the brain behind Carry The Weight records, and also plays in Ego Trip and Sectarian Violence. Doesn't it get tricky sometimes to combine all that with work and everything else ? Do any of you guys play in other bands as well ?

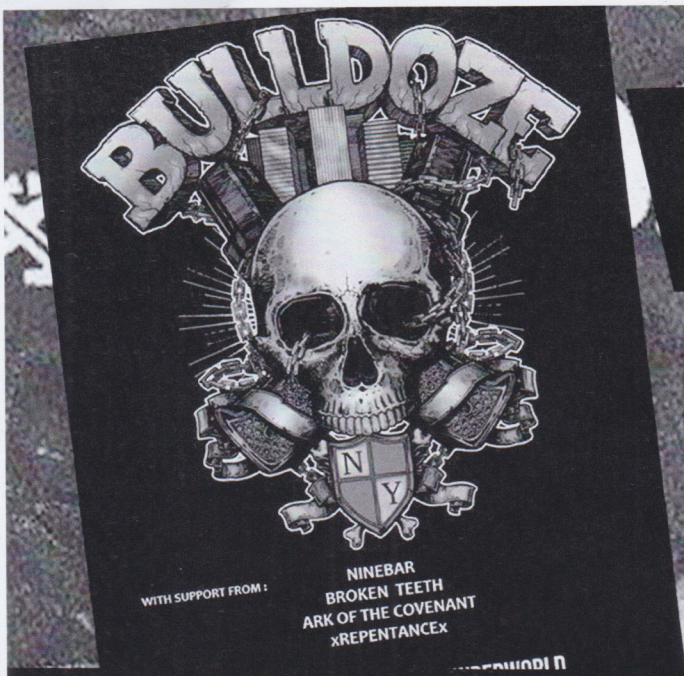
Yeah that's me! It is getting harder and harder as I get older to juggle the bands, label and professional life. But I love doing bands and playing hardcore. There is no better feeling. Especially as the UK is exploding with excellent bands right now.

Aside from xRepentancex, I currently play in: Sectarian Violence, Ego Trip, Final Rage, Unholy Majesty, Feeding Chain and do CTW Records. Oli plays in Guidance and Mankind. Andy also plays in Sectarian Violence. Oli and I are also doing a new band with some other Guidance/Renounced members that sounds like Strongarm/early Shai Hulud.





xrepentancex xr cex



Everyone loves a good movie sample at the beginning of a song, and it seems like you are no exception, with the 7" intro from The Watchmen and the True Detective clip on Dominion's End. Are there some non-musical influences on your music ? How good was True Detective by the way ?

Man, True Detective was so fucking good. One of my favorite series of recent years. I can't speak for everyone but I am heavily influenced by the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche (whom my doctoral thesis is on), the Prose Edda, a number of comics and fantasy games (those into Warhammer will get the 40K reference in 'War of Attrition!). The other guys will likely tell you other stuff as well. Oh, and 5- year old me would probably say Captain Planet! We are all nerds.

UK hardcore seems to be at an all-time high at the moment, with plenty of bands popping up everywhere, and many shows being set-up all over. What are some bands from that new breed that people should be paying attention to ? Any favorite places to play in the UK ?

I'm so happy with UK scene right now. It's fantastic. Everyone should be listening to Guidance, Renounced, The Flex, Obstruct, Violent Reaction, Fade, Blind Authority. I'm probably forgetting a few. Favorite places to play have got to be Leeds and Nottingham. London can be cool. Southampton has got a new thing going on to with lots of younger kids being pro-active and booking great shows.

Shout-outs, comments, anything else you'd like to add ?

Look out for a new band from the south coast called DAY OF RIGHTS if you like heavy music and Straight Edge. Thanks for the interview!





Edit : that interview was conducted in October 2014 and their LP The Sickness Of Eden came out in the meantime, and it's a real rager, a huge progression from the already very good 7" ! Review in the next issue.

REVIEWS



XRepentanceX – In Violation Of ASA: This 7" is taking you straight back to Europe in the late 90's/early 2000's, when tracksuit wearing, thugged-out straight-edge vegan warriors were spin-kicking the shit out of the non-believers in the pit, to the soundtrack of Slayer-worshipping hardcore bands. Arkangel meets Reprisal is basically what those 4 songs are about, and that very sound is nailed to a T, topped up with the mandatory, ultra-militant lyrics, so if you're into that sort of things you know you should grab it. (Fred)

Homicidal – State Of Mind: Started out back in the early 2000's as a side project from their previous bands, the Homicidal line-up is comprised of a bunch of 90's NY/NJ HC veterans from bands such as Bulldoze, One 4 One, Crown Of Thornz, All Out War … and I know if you're reading this zine you're enjoying that pedigree! This album is pretty much a current take on that 90's hard sound, with groove galore, and actually a solid emphasis on speed. With 17 tracks going down in less than 34 minutes, you know there's no time to fuck around here. The albums got featurings from a bunch of NYHC's figures such as Eddie Leeway, Martin BCS, Lord Ezec, Jorge Merauder and Puda from Train Of Thoughts/Agents Of Man, giving it a family vibe. It's no essential record, but if you're into all the previously mentioned band, or just wanna hear good straight-up NYHC played by OG's who know what they're doing, you should definitely get this one. (Fred)

Lifeless – Dream: Released on Fast Break Records! (WIC, Fury of V, Spudmonsters), Lifeless' second album is ironically titled "Dream". Yep, this band is the antonym of happiness. Yet, we can hear an evolution in the style of hardcore that Lifeless used to produce. This album seems more mature, less brutal, and more depressive than the previous one (that I dig a lot though). You will probably be surprised with the first listens, but wait to get into this because it's a great album. Period. If you don't like the previous releases by Lifeless, you might like this one. (Nico)

Vigilante – Quality Of Life: Excellent release from that Australian band. '87-era NYHC played tightly and with some kind of fresh twist to it that prevents it from sounding redundant or stale, like many other bands. No wonder most of those dudes have been playing in bands Down Under since the mid-90's, because those songs sound so effortless in their flow and groove. 10 tracks including an Altercation cover and a nice dub instrumental at the end. Top it all up with good lyrics about social issues, from a band that actually walks the walk and get involved in their local environment instead of just making bland noise. Quality release for sure. (Fred)

Lodges - Walking On Hands And Knees: There was until some years ago a band called Donkey Punch. I liked seeing Donkey Punch live because it was like going to the zoo: a Blood for Blood+beer-addicted singer, a fluo kid/punk drummer of Algerian-Egyptian descents (now producing some acid techno) and also a Louis Vuitton cap+Obituary tshirt-dressed guitar player. Let the past be the past, as Rick ta Life the human dreadlock would say, this band changed some members and its name to Lodges. As you would expect in this situation, they also changed their musical orientation. Dudes in Lodges thus play a controlled chaotic hardcore, and they do it more than well. If you're into Converge, Trap Them, Catharsis and stuffs like that, you will like this band. (Nico)

Body Count – Manslaughter: Surprisingly better than expected. Actually, like 90% of the population that knows BxC, I didn't expect anything at all. And I listened to this several times and it's pretty cool. Go over the funny-dumb "Talk Shit, Get Shot" video. It's not the best release ever huh, it's not either on the top 5 of 2014 but it's worth giving a listen. Gangsta-crossover like BxC used to do, nothing revolutionnary, it's typical BxC and it's well done. My favorite song is Pray for Death. They also covered Institutionalized's Suicidal Tendencies and re-actualized the lyrics, which are 4 minutes of what-the-fuck ahah. (Nico)

Incendiary – The Cost Of Living: I remember the first time I saw this band, it was in Baltimore at the Fallbrawl 2010 (with Cro-Mags, Stout, Suburban Scum, etc), and I thought "fuck, that sounds great". After a demo, an excellent Crusade (2009) that you have to listen, and some splits, they released The Cost Of Living. And "oh fuck" was once again my reaction. They play a heavy & metallic hardcore (a bit) influenced by 108 and Indecision, topped with interesting lyrics. I totally dig this band. (Nico)

King Nine – Scared To Death: Much props to Ratel Records for releasing this one in Europe, instead of having to pay for overpriced shipping from the US. Carrying the legacy of late 90's/early 2000's NYHC bands like Everybody Gets Hurt or Billy Club Sandwich, the Long-Island combo offers here 10 blistering tracks of no-holds-barred straight-up NYHC that should appeal to every Castle Height and Wetland core enthusiasts. The overall sound feels like a heavier and beefier version of Crown Of Thornz, while the afficionados will definitely get that EGH-drive, where the songs feel fast, even during the mid-tempo or slow parts. Everything's dynamic on there, with plenty of guitar leads, breaks and sing-alongs, while the lyrics are on some harsh-reality-tip type of thing. A very solid debut album.

Hoods – Gato Negro: On stage, Mikey Hoods is probably the funniest dude in the hardcore game. But no worries, he sounds really pissed off on this new release. Hoods is Hoods, fuck the trends, you can recognize them from 100 bands. If you don't like Hoods, don't listen, if you like Hoods, then listen. (Nico)

Look My Way – Last Will And Testament: This five tracks tape is the epitath of this rather short-lived german band. Picking up where they left with their last album, Side A got 3 good new songs of their brand of heavy, 90's influenced-core, complete with intricate guitar riffing (check out the title track !) and way better than average songwriting, which was already the case on the Mentality album. Side B has a new version of 5.2.0., aka their local postcode anthem, and a Minor Threat cover with lyrics in german. Quality music. All in all, I'd say this is a good way to go out in style. (Fred)

Menace – Agony: Ooooh shit ! This is some seriously good PAHC right there, 5 nasty and well-written metallic hardcore tunes that bring to mind fasts & furious, heavy-minded compatriots such as Steel Nation and Mushmouth. You should already have bought that one just based on those comparisons. This stuff will have your girlfriend coming back from work and finding you sweaty and excited in the middle of the living room, with the furniture smashed and scattered all over. (Fred)



Empire Of Rats – ST: Let's start this shit straight off, I reckon this album is my favourite of 2013. Violent and vicious metallic hardcore sounding straight outta the 90's. Them Rats dudes know how to play their instrument and crank out 11 tracks of pure mosh-inducing violence.Imagine a cross between In Cold Blood and Sastisfaction-era Hatebreed. Yeah it does get that hard. There's even a Cold As Life cover on there which flows perfectly with the rest of the songs, that should tell you how mean that shit is. (Fred)

Shrapnel – Demo: Complete 87' Breakdown/Fit Of Anger worship from a bunch of brit scenesters. What it lacks in originality get compensated by the quality of the songs, that specific NYHC sound being nailed to the point. They now have a second guitarist and I'm on the lookout for their new 7", it should deliver. The tape has a cool cover art and all the lyrics, always a good thing. (Fred)

Firing Squad - Demo Tape: Members of various Richmond VA punk and hardcore outfits decided to platoon up and deliver 4 tracks as in as many bullets for a proper execution. 80's inspired USHC that sounds really mean and beefy, totally unhinged cavemancore stuff. This reeks quite a bit of Negative Approach, even though more expert minds could come up with better comparisons. Third track CTO is the winner here, with its mean stomping riff that'll wake up the dormant primate inside of you. (Fred)

Dysphoria – Demo 2014: Nope, this Dysphoria is not a homonym of the 90s PA Disphoria. It's the same band. They released a new demo after years of absence (hiatus, split?). If you don't know Dysphoria, it's a destructured heavy hardcore band, very interesting musically speaking, totally out of typical heavy hardcore paths. And I think this is the reason why they have never been really popular or got the attention they honestly deserve. This demo is in the vein of what they did in the past, and I seriously dig it! For everyone into bands like Stigmata, Integrity and even Disembodied. (Nico)

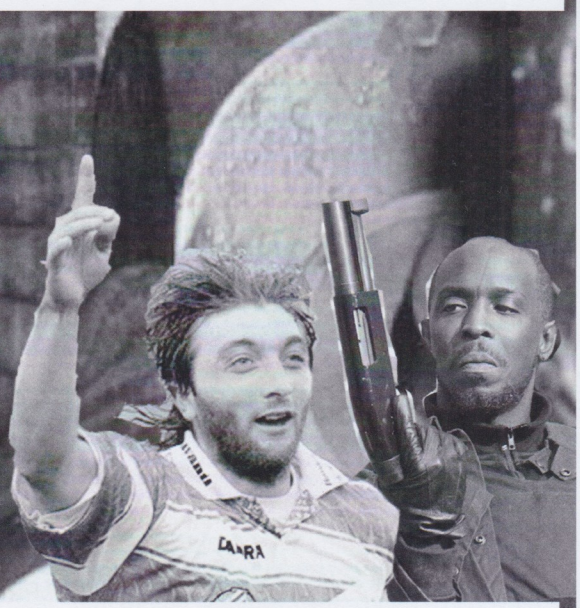
New Morality – No Morality: I've enjoyed seeing those guys play live since the first time I saw them back in 2007 or 08, but I always felt their albums were never just as consistent as their live shows. Opening with a Conan sample, this one packs a mean punch, 11 angry tracks following their own NYHC-inspired sound with a twist to it, somewhere between Mentally Vexed and Urban Discipline. The track Mental Prison is really great and reminds of Burn for some reason. Otherwise you can hear that there's been a lot of work on the guitars, the album is filled with little harmonies and solos that really spice things up.
The biggest problem is that the production is a bit too clean, it doesn't really suit the music, but other than that it's probably their best work to date, and the cover art is awesome.
They actually broke up in the time between the writing of this review and the zine being published, so RIP New Morality. (Fred)

Mizery – Survive the Vibe: I predict this band will be one of the next big hardcore thing in a near future. I'll cut off my dick if I'm wrong. Musically speaking, think of a sort of thrashy & groovy hardcore. You can feel some influences such as Leeway in the riffing, plus a touch of Real Talk in the vocals. Add tormented lyrics and a kind of death-oriented Krishna artwork to it and you get Mizery. Oh and it has been recorded by Taylor Young (Twitching Tongues, Ruckus). (Nico)

Clenched Fist – Gun's'N'Roaches: It's been 5 years since the last album by the Memphis Hardcore veterans, and this 5-track EP is a welcomed treat for everyone into their own brand of grooved-out southern-fried barbecue-core. Great lyrics (from local pride to conspiracy theory morons), and pissed-off vocals, the trademark sound of CF is definitely represented here, and I have to mention the break on Sense Of Entitlement, that whole last part is so groovy, catchy and heavy at the same time, I could almost keep playing it on repeat and smash things on indefinitely with that as a soundtrack. (Fred)

Homewrecker – Circle of Death: Faster and heavier version of Integrity. Well, don't get me wrong, it's absolutely not a copy-paste of Integrity, but this is where this band would be if d-beat/crust/grind influences were integrated in its music. It's their best release so far, evil, dark, raw, well arranged, and well produced. Perfect riffing, pissed off vocals. I'm not surprised that it's released by A389. (Nico)

Sheer Terror - Standing Up for Falling Down: Sheer Terror in 2014! Yeah, and bim bam boom this is a seriously good album. Reverend Bearer is at his finest, still pissed, still bitter. Musically speaking, this is also of good quality, faster and groovier than expected. I especially dig "Ain't Alright", as if we were expecting things to be alright with SxT... You see, veteran doesn't necessarily mean senile and uninspired. Yeah I might say this Standing Up for Falling Down is actually one of my favorite Sheer Terror. (Nico)



Blindside USA – Demo 2014: Recently signed on Straight & Alert Records, this band has released a promising angry demo. Actually I really dig it!
Marketed as "FFO Breakdown, Mental, Agnostic Front", this is perfectly described. I would also add some Internal Affairs-influenced riffing to it. The production is raw and it's better so. Cool, tip top, badaboom. Ah yeah and funny to read that Blindside Belgium was pissed off by the US Blindside using the same name.... like if there were not at least 4 Blindside in the hardcore game before the Belgian one..... (Nico)



Darkside NYC – Optimism Is Self-Deception Vol 1&2:
This album started to feel like their own Chinese Democracy because it kept being delayed for ages, but good things do come to those who waits, and this was sure worth it. Filled to the brim with 23 crazy tracks that pick up where they left with their first album, they just pushed every button to the max.
The hardcore meets death-metal of their previous incarnation is transformed in a blend of almost every genre of hard and heavy music you can imagine. It would be tedious to list everything going on, just know that this album is one of a kind, it's insane, it's bold, it has bongos and trumpets mixed in between a black-metal-type blast and a punk chorus, and the whole thing just keeps going back and forth between styles while remaining coherent, not a mean feat to achieve. "If you only knew the power of the Darkside" ! (Fred)

Said And Done – Better Days: Remember the 90's, when so many members of your favorite NYHC acts were trying to get in touch with their inner feelings by playing in more rocky, melody oriented bands?
You could say that SAD is following that path, even though those seeds were always present in the band's music. Luckily for us they haven't lost their great sense of riffing and songwriting, and this is a really solid output. As usual with the band, the artwork is really classy and there's liner notes to explain the meaning behind every song, which is something I appreciate. As for the music, while still retaining a couple of hardcore elements here and there (Count Me Out with Che from Born From Pain, Classic Story), it's the melodies that are definitely put forward on here - and catchy ones that is - all served by a very organic production that suits the record well. It might take a few listens to get into, but songs like Better Days or Crossroads are definitely gonna get stuck in your mind for a long time. (Fred)



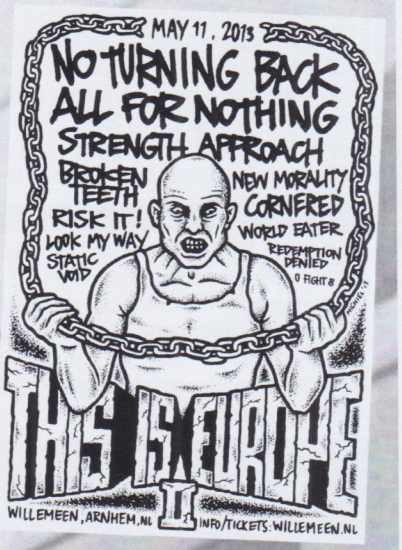
Foreseen – Helsinki Savagery: What is to write that hasn't been written about what was one of the most anticipated LP's of last year? I'll just say that work pays off, you can definitely hear that the band spent their time crafting great songs, and that going for analog recording was a wise choice because this album sounds just massive. My stereo speakers haven't spat out such a production in quite some time now. A lot more on the thrash than the core side of crossover, something I absolutely do not mind, every song is a madness of riff upon riff upon riff with many a break and solo to go wild to. Savagery is indeed a perfectly apt way to describe the feeling of that album. (Fred)

Harriers – Volte Face: Even though Montreal based Harriers started a few years ago, it has already released a couple of demo/EPs. Dunno if you knew, if not then try it! Their latest one is named Volte Face and it's even more crossover/ thrash hardcore than Harriers' previous records. If you're into Power Trip, Foreseen, Rock Bottom, you'll like probably like this LP. Full length album to be released on Lifers Records (Plus Minus, Enforcers). (Nico)

Sick of It All – The Last Act of Defiance: Last addition in the impressive discography of the Big Four of Still-Recording NY bands (Madball, Biohazard, SOIA, Agnostic Front), The Last Act of Defiance is probably the best album that SOIA has released for ages and you will miss something if you don't give it a try. It might be an inconstant album but numerous of tracks are pretty solid. So get over your "they should have stopped releasing albums in 1997", this works for Agnostic Front not for SOIA. I'm looking forward to seeing them live again. (Nico)

REDEMPTION DENIED

Ever since Redemption Denied started back in 2011, their shows were praised, and we have to say that seeing them live makes you realize how much they are a force to be reckoned with. In a day and age where too many bands play poor-man's metal in a confused attempt at being hard, with an overall lack of substance, a band like RD brings back the faith you had in the genre. Sharp riffs, dynamic songs and real convictions that are put forward, we had frontman Kasper answering our questions. Like he states at the end, this is an interview best read while Don't Forget The Struggle, Don't Forget The Streets or Born To Land hard is playing in the background.



Most people into European Hardcore must have heard of you by now, but for the sake of it, can you introduce the band? How did you guys get started, and what bands you played in before that?

Redemption Denied is a 5-piece hardcore band from Belgium and The Netherlands. It's Kevin and Timmy on guitars, Joey on bass, my brother Joris on drums and me on vocals. First time we got together was in Summer 2011. Davy (who originally played guitar on the demo) and my brother met up in the weekends at our place and occasionally just wrote bits and pieces of songs. At that time Davy, Kevin and Joey were in a band called World Gone Mad. When WGM fell apart they were looking for something new and Davy and Joris had made parts of songs. They ended up rehearsing back at our place and because I was always back home to work in the weekends and the band that I had been trying to get off the ground disbanded, I ended up doing vocals. Timmy joined after Davy moved to Australia. Joey and Timmy used to be in Silence Before Storm, Unbreakable and Blade together. Joris and me had a YC-band called Confidence that only did one show. Kevin and Davy played in Break&Enter together. Kevin also played in a band called Tempest before that. Joey and me also played in a band called Blindside until last year.

You're a band that seems to wear your influences proudly, and the sound you're going for is mostly inspired by the New England bands of the late 90's, like early Hatebreed, Death Threat and Blood For Blood, whom you actually got you name from.
What is it with that very style of hardcore that gets hooked up ? What would be some of the less obvious influences on the band in terms of sound or aesthetics ?

All of us have our own musical preferences, but these are bands that we're all into and we sort of gradually shifted towards the whole agressive metallic vibe with the first songs we wrote and it was really in line with what we wanted to go for back then and it still is. It simply covers some common ground for all of us. For me personally those bands aswell as some the heavier early 2000's bands manage(d) to get that feeling of urgency and anger across while staying straight forward and relatively close to the roots musically without having to resort to mindlessly writing songs that sound like 3-minute breakdowns and dying animals. Machine Head (old and new) and Stigmata are examples of things we all love and you which can possibly hear in there but which people might not immediately know about.



Most of your lyrics deal with current social issues, from the decay of society, to the financial crisis or religion's deceptiveness, but they're written in what I feel is a non-direct approach, with a lot of images, would you like to elaborate on that ?

I actually try to stay direct when writing lyrics. Most of it is written in first person and comes from how I experience a lot of things. But you might find lines that refer to a sense of confinement, despair and being powerless as they represent feelings that I think a lot of us share when we have to deal with things going on in the world/modern society on a day to day basis. We all have our own focus and convictions when it comes to that.
If some parts are less direct it's not because I try to evade the essence of things but merely because it's the best way to get a feeling across rather than to specifically highlight single issues or problems as we all differ in our focus but might very well feel affected by modern day's injustice in similar ways.

I have seen you live a couple of times, and you were very outspoken about having something to say as a band and gave rather passionate speeches between songs, something not so many bands do nowadays. On top of that, I witnessed that most of the audience didn't not care so much about what you had to say, and kept on chatting between each-other, waiting for the next song to kick-in.
What would you have to say about that? Does it disappoint you that people don't care as much about substance, or do you let it not affect you?



It's impossible for everyone to always relate to everything. I try to bring some substance to the stage since that's something that I consider to be important.
I understand that some people are not too keen to hear someone preach on stage for too long so I try to evade that and stick to the point where I can. I don't mind people chatting as I obviously don't mind other people having a good time.
As long as it doesn't interfere with anything that's not something I get wound up about. I do get irritated in case people are completely oblivious to any message conveyed through hardcore music in general. Then you just don't fucking get it. But I'd rather focus on doing things the way I deem to be right than to get caught up wasting time worrying about that stuff.

You're from the Netherlands and Belgium. These two countries are renowned for their strong scenes. How were some of the shows back when you first got into hardcore ? Which bands or styles did you liked the most and why?

G REMAINS

G REMAINS

NOTHING REMAINS

Me and my brother are the youngest in the band, I went to my first "HC" shows in 2005 I think, so can honestly only start there if I answer this. When I started to get a clue of things DeadxReckoning had just split up. I had to stick to local shows for some time as I only had my bicycle or public transport to get there. So I was mostly seeing shows in the Limburg area. The Setup came over a lot and always killed it. I always considered myself to be one of the LB/Maasmechelen kids as that'd be our home base for the most part.
We had a really strong scene with a lot of bands that had a pronounced metallic edge like Sets The Time (Big B - always down with the kids), Verify and XKOENX's Chimaera. Mostly mixed bills with different types of bands and everyone getting along. We also had a good exchange with the Dutch MOC scene. It all peaked around 2007-2009 and culminated in the Moshvalley fests but sort of fell apart when our local bands quit and the most active promoter stopped doing shows.
I believe that period also was a huge peak for the BE scene in general, we'd see True Colors play every weekend and almost every show was packed. TC and Rise and Fall for Belgium and NTB and Born From Pain in The Netherlands were bands that were able to unite a lot of people from all around and draw the necessary crowds to some of my favorite shows till date. I appreciated Justice though they never really did it for me. Regretfully only saw the last Dead Stop shows.



You've done a lot of touring since you've started the band, and you seem to be keen to play anywhere you can. I read that you even travelled to Russia by train to play a few shows. Can you tell us about that experience ? What are some of your favourite places to play, or memorable shows that you've played so far ?

We played Ukraine and Russia in Feb 2014. We actually flew into Kiev and from there on travelled by train to Moscow and Saint-Petersburg thereafter. A friend from Moscow hooked us up with the shows and travelled with us. Kiev was quite unsturdy and in the middle of riots, the guys from a local band called Power Play took care of us from the moment we set foot in the Ukraine and showed us around. Walking around you could sense that the tension was really building back then. Regrettably, a lot of people got hurt the week after we left. Played with Power Play and Bluesbreaker.

Took the overnight train to Moscow after that, with all our stuff and hoping not to get caught with merch and guitars. Vic talked us out of trouble with the Russian police during border patrols. Played the Guts Out demo release show after some of those guys took us around Moscow. Sick show and great band, check them out. Immediately got onto next train to St. Petersburg, some of the Guts Out guys got onto the train with us as well as dudes from a band called Stumbling Block who we played with that evening at the Next Round release show along with a trash band called Gorilla Troops. NR and Dima Hopes & Dreams hooked us up and took us in for the night. Completely packed venue, killer bands and the wildest crowd. Perfect last show for us. Without doubt one of our favorite shows to date.

Other ones that stood out for me: Gävle/Helsinki/Stockholm on our first tour, Dresden and Prague on True Spirit tour, MOD Hasselt with Rotting Out and Expire, the BE Nothing Remains release show, Kosice and Bez Ziewania fest in Bydgoszcz on the same release tour, Ieperfest last Summer. Love playing Switzerland every time and hope to make it back soon.

Can we expect some new music to come out in the near future, maybe an LP ?

We're busy working on an LP that will be out when it's done.





You have some graffiti-inspired merch, and also released a 12" compilation of both your EP's with the cover looking like a rap maxi 12". Do you think that hardcore and hip-hop have links to each other? Any rap and hardcore collaborations you liked?

There are numerous links. The underground aspect being the most important one for sure. The graffiti comes from the fact that a two of us are quite heavily involved in the whole graffiti thing, that's it. Geert Control Records put a lot of time and effort into getting those 12"s done for us and made sure they came out looking awesome. There's a lot of horrible attempts to incorporate rap in hardcore. Few came out right. Beastie Boys. E-Town Concrete definitely passes under the needle regularly. Shout out to Cold World.

On a lighter note, is it a mandatory requirement to be part of the band to shave one's head and own at leasts 3 Warzone or Cold As Life merch items ? Favorite Cold As Life song ?

The shaving has sort of become a pre-tour thing that we do. You come along, you shave your head. Gets me in the zone before a show. Always digged it when bands did that but it's not really mandatory. Kev and me are probably the only ones really minding the merch/shirt thing. We used to check out bands because their name came up on promo pics, thanks lists, because people wore their shirts to shows and we got to check out a lot of bands for the first time that way that are now among our favorites.
The magic of thankslists is something I think is somewhat unique to hardcore and in the same vein I guess we hope people will check out some of the stuff that makes it out of our closets every now and then. My favorite CAL song would probably be "All Alone" off of BTLH, might not be the logical pick but gets me amped every time.

Shout-outs, comments or anything else ?

Thanks for the interview. Shout out to Davy D.U. and all our friends. Check out Power Play from Kiev. Next Round from Russia. We'll be on tour with Terror, Nails and Risk It In March, come out if we hit any place near you. Play some Warzone or CAL when you're done reading this.

LIVE REPORTS

Cro-Mags/Guilty/Harda Tider/Shipwrecked/Beyond Pink - 26.04.14 Malmö



Stacked line-up for this show, my first one over the bridge in Crime City Malmö and it was real good. Got in and Shipwrecked had started playing. Singer had a Snix t-shirt, great 80's french Oi band, so I liked the nod. Their set was fine but quite static, and their songs are still hit of miss to me , live as much as on record. It was my 3rd time seeing Harda Tider, aka the hometown heroes, but first time on their turf, and obviously they brought the ruckus with their own style of Warzone meets Anti-cimex played to the max. I'd like to say that they are Scandinavia's best kept secret, and if you ever get the chance to see them somewhere between Stockholm and Copenhagen don't miss it, because people go crazy for them, and the band gives it back 100%.
Guilty took the stage for their last show and put the metallic influences of their music forward, complete with elaborate dual guitar harmonics and even a drum solo! Hadn't seen that at a hardcore show since Blacklisted played Paris in 2008, that was odd but cool. I kinda liked that band but their songs had a tendency to get too same-y, which you could really feel at some point. Good set though, ans they got the crowd moving for sure.

Now, I know there will always be some controversy around the Cro-Mags, but I guess that's only normal because the 30-years-and-still-going-strong feud between the members doesn't look like it's about to stop. Anyway, if you've seen them live in recent years, you probably know the recipe for their live shows, but to be honest, I don't mind because it is still played with a great amount of energy, and you can see that those guys are enjoying themselves, just seeing Pokey grinning like a maniac behind his kit through the whole set tells it. So yeah, it is a fun show, you get to sing-along to a bunch of ageless classics, and that does it. The show was pretty well attended, people from all over the Nordic, quite a few random euros and americans, plus a couple distros to pick-up zines or records, that was cool. (Fred)

Clenched Fist / Look My Way / Redemption Denied / Gone To Waste / Done - 02.05.14 Leipzig

Woke up at fuck o'clock to get a plane to Berlin. The was no doubt I was heading to hipster central, with a couple of dudes nonchalantly drinking their refined coffee while sporting some ironic moustache + long cloak combo that looked like a cross between the 3 Musketeers and a Harry Potter convention. Anyway, I fell asleep before the plane even took off and slept the whole way, easy. Nico picked me up at the airport and we headed out to the bus station so we could be on our way to Leipzig. Talked shit in french the whole bus ride, not sure our neighbors where keen but it was fun. Coming into Leipzig was like getting into an East-German version of Philly, plenty of vacant lots and abandonned buildings, that set up the vibe I guess.

Done were first, decent CT-style core, with a Before Dishonor cover to close their set. The singer had a good energy. Gone To Waste was next, but we had been out and about since the morning so we needed some rest, chillin' in in the couches drinkin' beer, talkin' about the Polish hardcore scene and dissing the way too many pieces of Desolated merch being displayed around the venue. I kinda regret missing their set in hindsight because their album is pretty good.

Redemption Denied came, saw and conquered. Hardcore that is just plain hard without having to go for overly metal stuff, people went crazy and as usual that was probably the best set of the evening. I did like Look My Way, but you could feel that this was their last tour, and technicals problems didn't help neither. The set was half-convincing, not completely delivering their brand of CT meets Troy--core. We got most of their best songs (Black Souls, Backlash, 5.2.0) and the cover of Smash Your Enemies, a staple of their live set, that got the pit bonkiers as usual.

I really love Clenched Fist becauseof their unique sound but I have to admit that 97% doesn't give a rat's ass about them, which is a shame. Maybe because they never toured so much, Their set was obviously a little bit static but it was late, and what can you expect from a bunch of dudes whose main diet is deep-fried Mars bars and pork ribs. Just kidding, it was a good set overall, groovy bass lines, angry vocals, the songs were just as good than on cd. It sucked though that most of the audience had left by then, not counting the peeps that just spent the whole evening at the bar. Some crew dude thought it would be a good idea to crowdkill in an half-emptied venue, punching Nico in the throat even though we were standing at the back, and when he came to confront him, the guy moaned like a scolded teenager and left towards the bar area ... another proof that this youtube-wannabe trend is plain ass lame. Good thing though, there were 3 distros at the show, with a nice selection of zine and records, I always appreciate that, instead of bands touring with 47 random merch items and no music. (Fred)

Weekend Nachos/Lesion/Halshug - 14.06.14 Copenhagen

The show was announced for ages, but no infos anywhere about the venue. Luckily I ended up founding out about it the very evening, otherwise I might have had to go to the other side of town to find a no-show, so much for promotion eh? Anyway, the venue was in some alternative squat and drew the usual crowd of freaks and misfits. Patched-denim heaven, spiked-leather-jacket galore, facial-tattoos central, and a an overall assortment of weirdos and black metal dudes in sunglasses that make you look like a prep-school teacher.

Lesion played first, and their music was a kind of sluggish-midpaced punk with a strong old-school metal tinge and black metal vocals ? Something weird along those lines. It actually sounded pretty good at first, kinda like ealry Venom and there was a real evil vibe to the music, but the songs got too samey after a while.

Halshug were apparently well-known and appreciated around here. Fast grinding powerviolence that simply never slows down, it's just fast fast fast faster faster back to fast fast music, kinda like the grind equivalent of a Twista album for anyone who get that They played well and tight to be honest, I just wasn't really into, but the punks sure did pogo to their sound.

Weekend Nachos started and as they played the first stomp part, I started raging on, good ol' side by side stomp, you know? Apparently one of the front row punks wasn't pleased and try to kick me in the chest ... dude was like 110kg and gave me some lame-ass kick. I stopped and came up to him, actually trying to be nice 'cause I'm a nice guy, but he then was looking away and pouting like a vexed princess and whatnot. What a cunt.
Anyway, the WN set was a hella lot of fun, they raged through a good setlist, their singer delivering the right amount of fun that everyone likes about them. Punks were pogoings and I was just stomping politely, to try and not offense any other enemies of society. (Fred)



Turnstile/Angel Du$t/Dogchains – 16.08.14 Berlin

This show was sold out for months, meaning that everybody was stoked for this show! And screw those who don't have tickets.
-Gabz: Hey man, I went home to pick the tickets and I don't have them!
- Me: What do you mean, you don't have the tickets? We bought them 5 months ago already.
- Gabz: I swear I don't have them, I always put my tickets in the same box and there's nothing…
- Nico: Ok I'm gonna look into my emails and I call you back
Yeah ok I fucked up, I was supposed to have the tickets. I pre-ordered the tickets, got a confirmation that they are pre-ordered for 4 days but forgot to collect them at the shop. As it was not prepaid, it means I could not retrieve them…. Luckily, the guys booking the show are absolutely nice dudes and after I explained the story, I could purchase two tickets for us at the door.

So we missed Dogchains, but not the entire show. Right after them was Angel Du$t playing and I was really disappointed. Not that I was a big fan of their music but I did not expect their set to be so poor (vocals, charisma, drumming…). Set was like 40 minutes of boredom. We thus went upstairs to grab some beers until the end of the set.
Then came Turnstile on stage and fuck, they played 1 single note and the public went nuts! This was the same drummer as AxD and it's crazy how bounded he was in his previous set… Turnstile's singer (who was Trapped Under Ice's drummer) was totally into his set, like a possessed dude. Full of energy, 40-45 minutes of mosh, slams, stage divings, 40-45 minutes of good time, good tracks, good atmosphere. The best show of 2014 in Berlin IMO. (Nico)

Cold Reality/?????/Worst Doubt - 18.08.14 Paris

Back to the motherland for the holidays, I could rub cheese under my armpits in the morning without looking weird. Some small show was going on, so I was keen to go, also cause it's always a good way to hang out with the crew, waddup dawgs? The twinz had brought me some goodies from the Ieper Fest, a King Nine shirt and the Roar Of The Street Dogz demo 7» by Power Play, excellent Ukrainian band.
Worst Doubt is comprised of members from various current french bands, they were going for that King Nine style, think late 90's/early 2000 NYHC, lots of hard parts. It was their first show and the set was pretty good, really tight, which is a new thing for french bands hahaha.There is room for improvement, it lacked more groove to smoothen all that, but it's a band I would be keen to follow if they kept going. Some weird-ass emo russian band took over and I can't believe I sat through the whole thing. A bunch of folky nerds at the front were rocking out to them though, so what do I know eh? Maybe they had a feature in Vice and people got interested?
Cold Reality is to Hungaria what Last Dayz was to Poland, the local straight-up hardcore band that plays that hard bouncy style that'll get your ass groovin and moovin. Their Death Threat meets Madball style was pretty efficient live, their set had a nice flow to it, with some peeps going nuts in the pit. Picked-up the demo tape for good measure, always nice to spin some eurogroove on the turntable once in a while. (Fred)

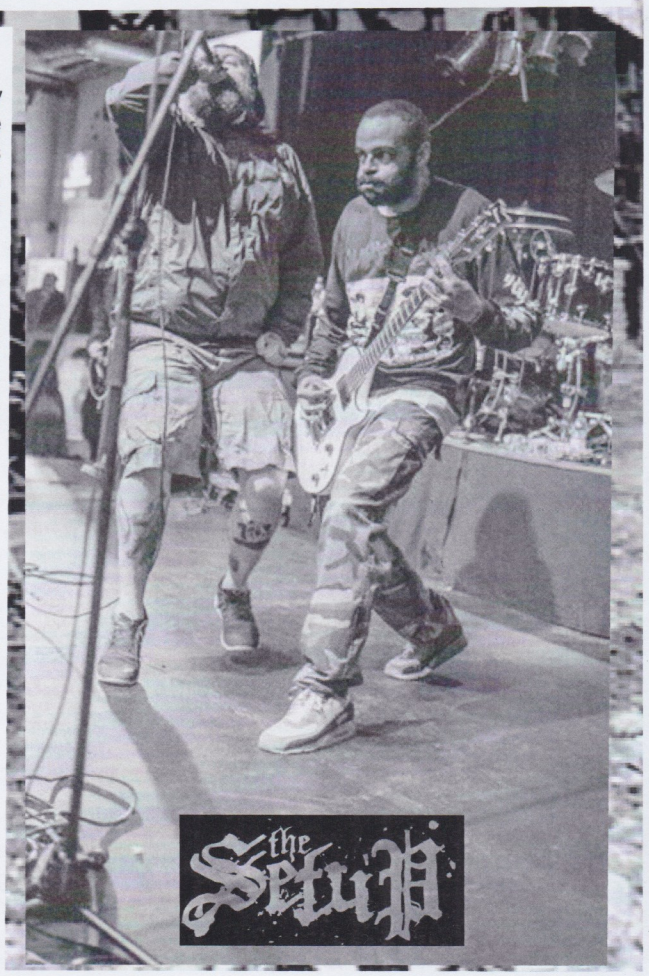
Still Cold Fest – 23.08.14 Hannover

Too many beers, too many whisky-ginger ales… on the other hand, I could enjoy on stage bands that I don't like on vinyl/CD. I will try to make it short, and the listing is not following the running-order because due to last minute cancellations there was a different running order that my friend Gabz and I didn't see it. So in the top sets, I will definitely put Redemption Denied which is the band I've seen the most this year and I've never been disappointed by them.

Gone to Waste, a good surprise, is like Borussia Dortmund in Champions League 2013. AYS, best German band IMO, did a pretty solid and enthusiastic set, and it was a blast! Compare them to Bayern Munich. Desolated was playing some Desolated, and that's not a compliment. I will never understand the hype around them and because of that, I consider them as Manchester City in Champions League 2013. The Setup of Belgium is like Anderlecht, they came, they did their set, I like them, but few people cared about them and that's sad.

Broken Teeth are like Chelsea, big name in the 2014 hardcore game but I can understand some don't like this band. No Zodiac, I don't remember if I've seen them but I know they only have one guitar riff. WolfxDown canceled their because the singer left with short notice. Unit731, the band's name is referring to the Japanese medical unit called Unit731 that made horrible and disgusting tests on Chinese civilians in the 1940s. The band kept the tradition of torturing peoples' auditory canal with their linear music. I hope they won't read these lines and find me and burn my foot sole. Sorry dudes if it is offensive, but hey, freedom of speech.

Zero Mentality, Schalke 04, they made a comeback after years of absence but there was something missing. Ablaze is the first band we saw at the fest, we arrived at the end of their set so I cannot tell anything about their show. We missed War Charge and Swamps and I'm really bummed about that because these two bands are pretty cool ones. Next time I hope... All in all, it was a really well organized show in a cool venue split in 2 rooms, a big one with obviously a bigger stage and a smaller room with, guess what, a smaller stage. Support their fest by attending the 2015 edition if you live in a 250km radius of Hannover. (Nico)



Negative Approach / Commie Cowboys - 19.09.14 Copenhagen

So NA was playing 10 minutes from my house, and hardcore shows around here not always being so many, I had to go. Commie Cowboys opened and they sounded like some 90's Fat-Wreck or Epitaph type of band. To be honest I wasn't into it, the music was way too clean and polished, and the guitarist was trippin wild on some guitar-hero type of shit, soloing everywhere, with even a Hendrix-styled-guitar-behind-the-back-solo at the end of the set. It would've been all right if he had actually set his guitar on fire, but he certainly did not. Negative Approach came and pretty much blasted through their discography, no breaks, no speeches, just a couple of funny punchlines from the bass-player who looked like the coolest old-dude ever, like that's what you wanna grow into when you reach 73 and keep playing hardcore. All the classics plus a couple covers got an assortment of punks, coredudes and metalheads vibing in the pit to it, singing along and dancing. (Fred)

Night Fever/Harda Tider/Halshlug/Brudte Lofter/Ruined - 10.10.14 Copenhagen

I was keen to see Ruined, and for some reason they had no bass player that night, but they still raged through their set anyway. Metallic hardcore that was kinda reminiscent of Rise And Fall, with less distinctive vocals. Brudte Lofter came after, and I enjoy seeing this band live. 80's punk/hardcore played with a certain precision that is not always common in the genre, while still being very energetic live, check'em out. Since I'm not really into Halshlug's, I hung outside with a bunch of swedes, who strangely enough ended not checking out any bands. Harda Tider was up next and they blasted the whole venue apart, as usual. People go insane for them on both side of the Oresund and tonight was no exception. They had a minor setback because the electricity went out during their set, but otherwise it was all good.
Now I was really looking forward to see Night Fever, because I always had that «every time they play I'm out-of-town» pattern that got in the way. They are probably Denmark's biggest punk and hardcore band, with a distinct blend of street punk and heavy metal with melodies, or maybe it's the other way around? Since they're the hometown heroes, you can imagine how nuts everyone goes in the pit, and their show was pretty wild. Only problem, is that shows always run on punktime at that venue, and having bands playing at 2am makes it hard to fully enjoy their set. (Fred)





Foreseen/Steel Inferno/Thurs - 20.10.15 Copenhagen

Woooo, settle in, because that show was some funky shit, lemme tell you. So I get to the venue and there's these crusties hanging out, so far so good you're gonna tell me, but in the lot there's this one guy with facial tattoos and piercing and fucking horns implants on his forehead !!! Like dude was Satan walking around, that was one of the stupidest and ugliest things I've ever seen. I did have a laugh when I saw him going kissy-cuddly with his girlfriend though, not that's he's not entitled to it, it's just such a contrast to someone who apparently spent major bucks to look like the most evil dude out there. Anyway, turns out he's the singer for the first band, Thurs. So they hit the stage, and now he's on there with his whole head and face covered in a weird veil, so like no one can see him. Whatever. The music wasn't too bad to be honest, some sort of crust-punk with black metal vibe, not really my thing but pretty well done I guess, and they had quite a few cool riffs in the mix actually. The funny part was that most of the audience was watching their set sitting on tables and chairs all-around, and applauding politely during the breaks … didn't really fit the vibe, did it?

Next up was Steel Inferno, and as the name might have given it away, they're playing heavy metal. But before we go into that, there's some flavor to it. The band is composed of a bunch of dudes in their 40's, beer bellies all around, including a greek, a frenchie and a polish guy, with a woman singing. So they start playing and the music ain't too shabby, plenty of riffing and soloing all over the place, with a couple of really good mosh-parts, and to be honest they actually were very tight. Now the set is on its course while during one the songs, the singer starts to get queasy, takes off her glasses, sits on the side of the stage feeling uneasy, all of their friends in the audience are rushing to bring her water, coke or beer … all the while the band just keeps on riffing away, like nothing is happening. She ends up feeling better, and the band then plays their last song, woohoo, everything's cool.

So by the time Foreseen got on stage, I can imagine that they had caught a gist of what the whole show was like. Half of the audience had left because they only showed-up to support their friends, which left around 20 people at best to watch their set. Anyway, they still raged through it, playing mostly new songs and ending with Structural Oppression. A hippie was jamming along, the barmaid was headbanging and 4 random dudes were nodding their heads to the set while I moshed the whole time through. What a show. (Fred)

Out Of Breath/No Second Thought - 02.11.14 Copenhagen

If you're reading this zine, you'll quickly find out that we have a strong interest in Finish hardcore, as it's probably one of the most overlooked scene in Europe, maybe due to somewhat being isolated from the Mainland, as well as a lack of proper touring from most bands. Anyway, the cool thing with FHC is that their best bands take what would be your run-of-the-mill-moshing-hardcore-with-metallic-influences and spice it up with strong musicianship and better song structures. Wether it's the party-thrash-wiggercore of Ratface, the groove of Bolt or the gruffness of Cutdown, just to name a few, Finland has always came up with killer bands, so of course I was keen to check these 2 out. It was a free show and despite that, I think there were about like 10 people there? Welcome to Copenhagen. So anyway, both bands played that metallic style, only thing being that they hadn't quite nailed it yet. They had some cool groovy parts, but they should focus on writing more dynamic songs, and avoid the pitfall of bland euro-beatdown with those boring slow-as-a-snail part who are actually uninteresting and inefficient. (Fred)

Hounds Of Hate/No Time - 10/11, Copenhagen

So this concert was on a cold Monday night at the same venue I had seen Weekend Nachos at, but strangely enough it didn't bring their usual crowd of misfits. Anyway, No Time started and I have to say I was really impressed, and so was most of the crowd. Hardcore with a strong punk and oi flavor to it, plenty of catchy melodies and good solos while still being aggressive, and he singer was that small dude with plenty of energy and anger in the voice, they really rocked out during their set, it was awesome.

I had seen Hounds Of Hate the previous year in CPH and had been a bit disappointed, the stage was too big, there wasn't so many people for their set, and their own performance wasn't the best. Tonight was a lot better, they were tight, the sound was good, and they delivered their NYHC 88 style with a lot more punch to it, including a Banned In DC cover that was pretty cool, even though a bit sloppy. The only thing that bothers me with this band is that they seem to have a too-cool-for-school attitude, which they already had the last time. Bands should not take things for granted, just because we are «euros» or whatever the fuck they think, doesn't mean you can go around with a smart-ass half-jaded attitude. (Fred)

WolfxDown/Benchpress – 03.01.15 Berlin

I'm not a big fan of Benchpress and I'm not a fan of WolfxDown at all so I will try to be a bit objective. Benchpress arrived on stage and I didn't know this band was so popular. If you know Cassiopeia, the venue has a capacity of about 250 and it was packed, a big part of the public was there for them. Their set was of a good quality, I must admit. I can't really be objective for WolfxDown, and will always be surprised that the singer of a hardcore band pushes back a dude who wants to SING ALONG. No, even if the dude looked a bit like a creep, he was probably not attempting to touch your ass/kiss you/hug you/rape you. The dude liked your song and wanted to sing with you but you preferred to push him like he was a potential threat to I don't know what. Well, you have your reasons I guess.... (Nico)

Expire, Coldburn, Beneath the Wheel - 19.02.15 Berlin

I suck at attending the first bands sets. I don't do it on purpose, I'm always late (dates, job interviews, flights, trains, etc) and I don't know how to change it. So I haven't seen Beneath the Wheel. But I've seen Coldburn and it wasn't bad. To be correct I don't know what to tell about their show, but it's one of the actual most appraised German band along with Risk It! Whatever. Expire arrived on stage and according to the number of Expire beanies, a huge percentage of the audience was there for them.

Oh talking about Expire beanies, check out this blog: http://girlsinexpirebeanies.tumblr.com/ To me Expire is like an access door to the hardcore world for non-initiated populations. They play easy listening hardcore, it's popular, and if you cannot set your mind accordingly you will just hate them. They seem to play in a different league, a league for people who don't listen to hardcore. For that reason I'd rather don't care about them than hating them. Anyway, let's go back to the set. Past the generic speeches about the city/the venue/the public, they delivered a solid set. I noticed I like one track, Sleep Lost. (Nico)

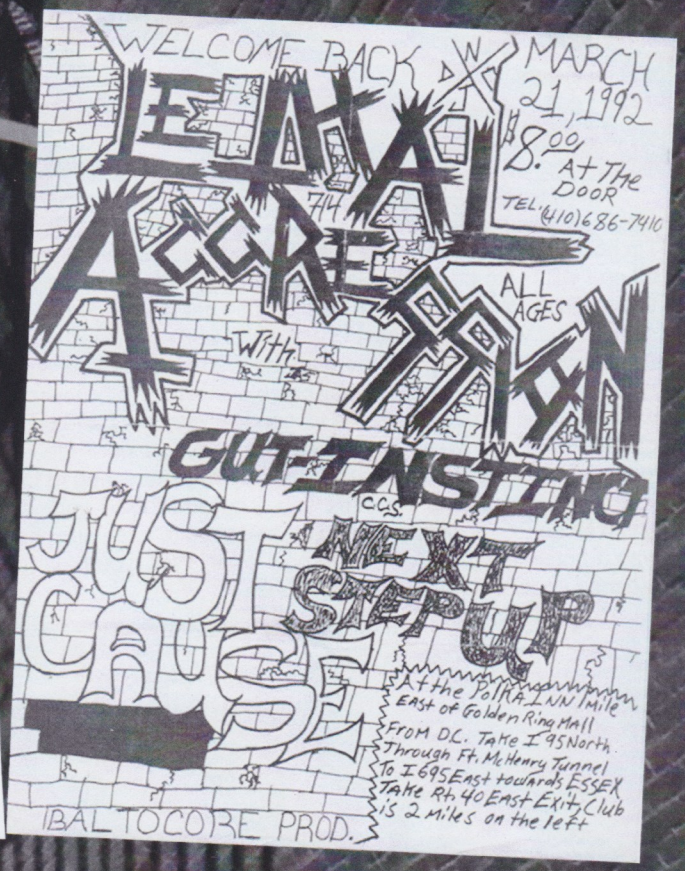


NEXT STEP UP

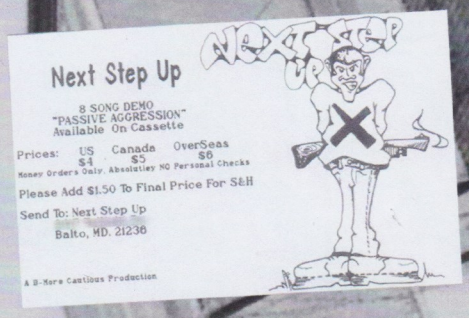
To be honest, this interview is a piece of work. Next Step Up was always one of our favourite bands, their extra groovy heavyness being right up our musical alley. Beyond that there was something more to the music, an attitude and a ruggedness that keeps us playing their song over and over to this day. We got hold of singer Jr Glass and asked him a shit ton of questions about anything and everything Balticore. So sit down, crank open that beer or that coke, relax and get ready for some major knowledge to be dropped on you !

How was the Baltimore scene when you started going to shows ? Do you remembers your first show ? Any stories from shows back then that you wish to share ? Who where the influential bands ?

Not like I really enjoy thinking about how old I am, but I started going to shows in Baltimore back in the 1980's. Back then, the scene was much more focused around punk and hardcore punk; "hardcore" had not yet evolved into its own genre as we now know it. There used to be this crazy older hippy dude named Jules who used to put on punk shows at his loft apartment in a bad part of town. He would have these punk bands playing in his loft almost every weekend, like The Adolecents and Minor Threat. Eventually, Jules rented an abandoned building across the street from his Loft and called it The Eutaw Street Clubhouse – everyone who knew Jules and the scene still called it The Loft.



I lived in Baltimore County which was about 10 minutes from the city but was far enough away that the bus lines didn't run out to where I lived on a regular basis. I used to walk 3 miles through the woods to get to a local mall where I could catch a bus at 5:30pm on Friday that would take me downtown to a really shitty and dangerous part of Baltimore to see shows at The Loft.
Because the only bus I could catch would leave me at the club by 6:30-7pm, I had lots of free time on my hands before the shows would start and me and my friends would go to a local liquor store, Ji Liquors, where if you could see over the counter, they would serve you booze.

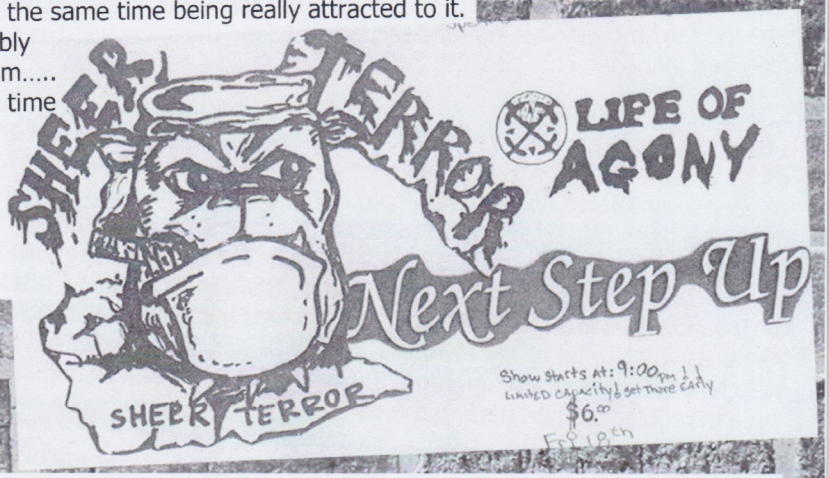


My friends and I would ask people for spare change and use the money to buy beer and get money to get into the shows. I was usually pretty trashed and would panhandle enough money for beer, show admission, and make sure I had enough money for bus and cab fare. At the end of the night, I could catch a bus that would stop at the city line, still 5 miles from my house, so I would have to make sure I had bummed enough money to cover a cab ride from the end of the bus line. There were many drunken nights where I had to stumble home 5 miles in the dark....anyway, looking back it's a miracle I even survived...there was a pretty close-knit scene of punks, skins, and metal people who would go to see these killer shows at The Loft and we all hung in the parking lot drinking beer and being angry young punks doing dumb shit....it was much more a scene of people, a family if you will, of other rejects from around the city and surrounding areas who got together regardless of which band was playing. I saw so many great bands at that venue and met many of the people I still call friends and brothers today.



Bands I got to see there included: The Exploited, Black Flag, Agnostic Front, UK Subs, English Dogs, GBH, Sheer Terror, Government Issue, Cro Mags, DRI, Corrosion of Conformity, Raw Power, 7 Seconds, and tons more. Back then there were a few local bands, many good, but none at the time who were playing what would later be known as east coast hardcore that we know today.....

One of the first shows I remember was seeing Sheer Terror back in like 86 and I was scared because the singer got out in the circle pit and was running around punching people in the face. I remember ducking a fist and him laying out the guy standing next to me. There were a bunch of skinheads from NY and DC at the show and I remember being scared of the chaos and violence but at the same time being really attracted to it. I became a skinhead later that same year and have probably since been guilty of cause lots of similar chaos and mayhem..... in fact, me and my friends became skins around the same time hardcore was defining itself as a genre of its own with bands like Agnostic Front, Sheer Terror, and Cro-Mags leading the way for skins. We called ourselves by many names back then, The Party, Fraternal Brotherhood, B-More Cautious Crew, but settled on one, Charm City Skinheads (CCS) that would stick and go on to influence and shape the sound of Baltimore Hardcore.



We had some harder punk bands, like Krack, who had a good following and local presence, and around 88-89 or so, some friends of ours who were in CCS started a band called Gut Instinct. They had a great run and, in my opinion, defined a Baltimore sound and spirit whose influence can still be felt and heard in the sounds of bands like Next Step Up, Stout, Trapped Under Ice, and others. The CCS crew would go to lots of Gut Instinct shows and were known for dancing hard and beating up Nazi skinheads. Some of us were roadies for Gut Instinct and others did record labels and zines and booked shows to help promote the band and the local scenes. I started my own booking company called B-More Cautious Productions and started booking shows with bands like Gut Instinct, Sick of it All, Sheer Terror, Underdog, etc at local venues in Baltimore and DC...all of that was before I had ever been in a band or even thought about being in a band. I never considered myself to be good enough to be in a band or cool enough to do it, I was basically an angry outcast who liked to arrange shows and hang out with bands. I enjoyed playing an outside role in the scene and I never thought I had what it takes to be in a band.....

How did NSU started ? There's a flyer online of a show you're supposed to have played with the rap band The Beatnuts ? How was that show ? Do you enjoy rap music ? What would be some of your favorites records ? Would you have liked to play more mixed shows like that ?



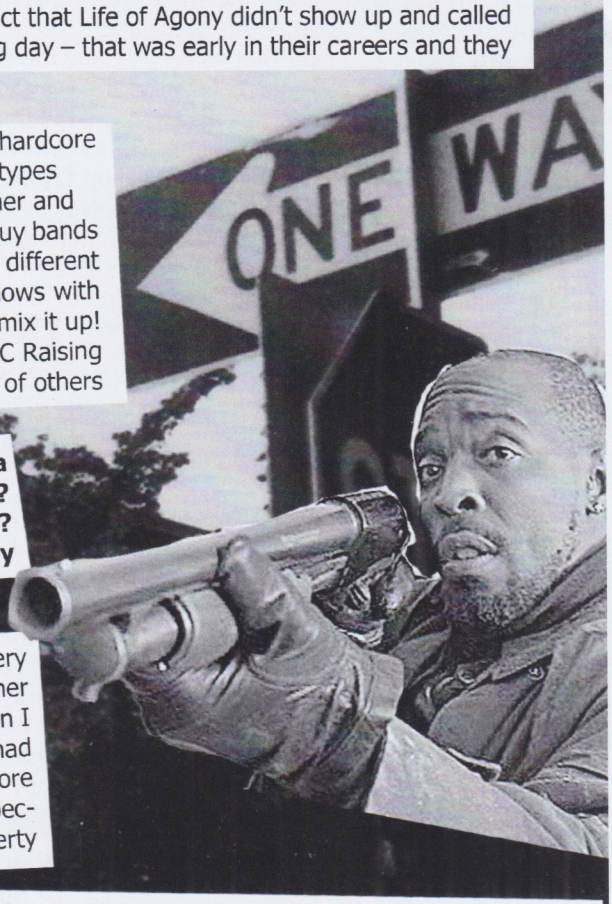
NSU was started by our original bass player and guitar player who were best friends growing up. Aaron Martinek and Mike Ayers had been learning how to play their instruments while growing up in the same small town where I went to school and grew up, Perry Hall. They were several years younger than me, which was a bigger deal when we were younger, and had been going to shows that I used to book and knew me and my younger brother, Will, who was a bit of a local 'legend' in the small town. Aaron and Mike started NSU in Aaron's mom's basement and had a good friend of mine, Dave Huntt, singing for them.

They only did a couple of shows with Dave and had a parting of ways. They asked me if I would like to try out for them and I initially turned them down. I didn't think that I would be good as a singer and didn't want all that attention drawn to me. Aaron and Mike knew that if I was singing for them, they would be able to play more shows since I was the guy who booked most of the hardcore shows in the area. Eventually, I regretted not at least trying out to sing for them and mentioned it in passing to a mutual friend.

When the news got back to Mike and Aaron that I might still be interested, they called me up and I went and met Aaron's mom who had to take my finger prints and run a background check on me because I was this older guy – 22 years old, hanging out with her 16 year old baby, hahaha...I tried out for them and never looked back. It has been a great time ever since. That was back in like 1990 or 91. We never really thought we would do much besides practice in Aaron's mom's basement and maybe play a few shows here or there that I booked....we ended up playing with lots of bands who were inspirations to us growing up like Cro Mags, Sick of it All, Sheer Terror, Bad Brains, and more and we went on to record 6 or 7 records and CDs, toured Europe several times and Japan twice. It has been a long and crazy time with some people who are like family to me.

Regarding the show with The Beatnuts, I used to book shows under the name B-more Cautious Productions, so I had lots of band managers looking to get shows for their acts in our area. I was approached by the manager of The Beatnuts and asked if I would be interested in doing the show so I said hell yes! I booked the show with NSU, Life of Agony, and 3 Levels of Genius at a local steel workers union hall. That show was great despite the fact that Life of Agony didn't show up and called me the next morning asking for directions thinking the show was the following day – that was early in their careers and they had bad management.

I do enjoy SOME rap music but its not really my first choice. I live and breathe hardcore music and always have. But back in the day, I would do shows to draw in all types of people associated with the hardcore scene as a way to bring people together and introduce them to new sounds. I used to book straight edge bands with tuff guy bands and hip hop because to me it was always about the scene and atmosphere of different people coming together to mix it up. Today, there are too many 'fests' or shows with 6-10 bands that all sound the same, to me it was much more entertaining to mix it up! As far as what some of my favorite rap records are, I would say old Run DMC Raising Hell, NWA Straight Outta Compton, Public Enemy It Takes a Nation...and lots of others were in regular rotation back in the day....



How was growing up in Baltimore ? The city got mostly notorious via the tv series Homicide, Life On The Streets, and then The Wire ? Would you say those series portrays Baltimore in an accurate way ? Would you say the city has evolved a lot since then ? Would you say that there is a typical Baltimore mentality?

I grew up in a small town on the outside of the city called Perry Hall. We were very close to the city, maybe 5 miles from the line, but as a kid it was a whole other world away since there was no real public transportation to take us there. When I was old enough to get into music and learn about places like Jules' Loft that had shows every weekend, I spent a lot of time in the city. Baltimore was even more dangerous back then. The TV shows definitely do represent a very real perspective on what life in Baltimore city is like. The city has been plagued with poverty and violence for a very long time.



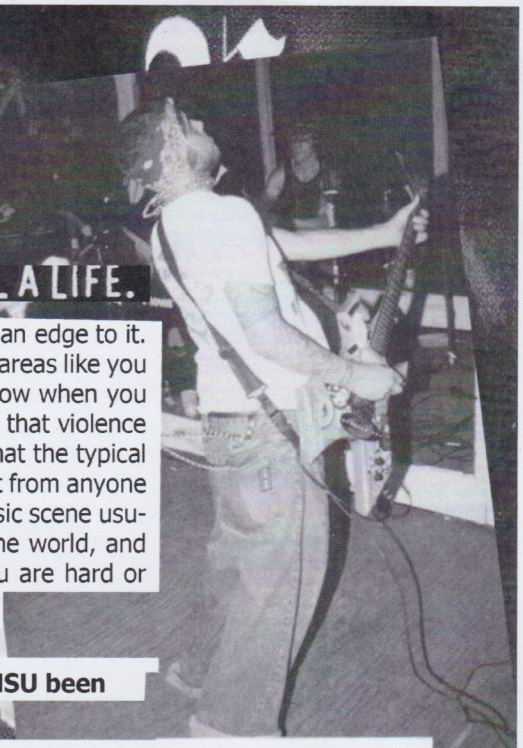
A majority African American city, Baltimore experienced "white flight" back in the 70's where white people with money moved out of the city to the surrounding areas leaving the inner city a place where people who had no means of escape were forced to live in a landscape that was dark, dirty, and often violent. It was exactly the kind of place where a bunch of degenerate punk rockers and hardcore kids could attend shows in a sketchy abandoned building like The Loft and go unnoticed by the police and local authorities. I think that the local residents thought that we were all these crazy white kids and that there must be something wrong with us....they basically left us alone....but once in a while shit got outta hand....



I remember being at a DRI show when the New Edition concert was taking place in the local coliseum. After the New Edition concert got out, there were thousands of local young kids roaming the streets causing violence and trouble. They came upon the DRI show at The Loft and started throwing bottles at the hardcore kids and beating people up, it was super scary for me being a 16 year old white kid from the county who didn't have a car and had to catch a bus home amid all that chaos. Luckily, I caught a ride home that night out of the chaos and didn't end up with my head smashed in or in handcuffs.....the city, and the state of race-relations in Baltimore and the US, have changed immensely since then...for the better.

While racism is still a big problem here in the US, back in the 80's the lines were fairly starkly drawn. White people just didn't go into the city, especially the parts where we went. I had been chased and had bottles thrown at me in some parts of the city just because I was a dumb white kid with a mohawk in their neighborhood (come to think of it, I got into plenty of shit with dumb white rednecks too just because of how I looked...). On the whole, the city still has terrible violence and poverty in some areas, which is what gives TV shows like The Wire ammunition, but people get along much better now, lots of areas of the city are more prosperous, white people have moved back, they city has had revitalization....but there will always be a tension, just beneath the surface here. The city is a patch work of different neighborhoods and you have to be aware of where you are because you can go from one really nice, safe area, to a place where you can get killed in a matter of blocks....

CCS IS IN CONTROL AND IF WE CATCH YOU SLIPPIN' -
YOU'LL GO DOWN LIKE THE REST. A HOLY ASS WHIPPIN'
YOU BITCH-ASS RACISTS'LL GET BEAT LIKE YOUR WIFE -
THE ONLY SHIT WE'RE TAKIN' FROM YOU IS THE SHIT YOU CALL A LIFE.



I think that sense of imminent danger lurking just around the corner, gives Baltimore an edge to it. Even though most of the kids who go to shows or do bands don't come from the crazy areas like you see on The Wire or Homicide, the mentality creeps into your psyche because you know when you go to your band practice spot, or to a club to see a show in a sketchy part of the city, that violence can happen at any second and you have to be ready for the possibility. I would say that the typical Baltimore mentality is work hard, play hard, have a good time, but do not take any shit from anyone and always be ready to fight if you have to...people who come to Baltimore for the music scene usually love it. The kids in the scene are amazing, they welcome people from all over the world, and they support local and touring bands. Just don't come here with an attitude like you are hard or tough, because you will be tested by people here who ARE hard and who ARE tough.
If you just come and be yourself and have fun, you will get along great....

Many Baltimore-based bands sound pissed off or heavy. On what way has NSU been influenced by the city and its mentality?

A great question! I guess I never really thought about it before. Looking back on my personal experiences, I can say that I was an angry young man when I was in my teenage years. I think a lot of people, especially guys, go through a period in their life when they start to look for meaning and ways to express and exert themselves in the world. Like many of my friends at the time, I came from a broken home with parents who divorced when I was early in my teenage years; just when my hormones were kicking in along with my rebellious attitude. I found a 'home' in the Baltimore scene. As I described earlier, what being a part of the Baltimore scene meant was going into very bad parts of a working poor city to be around people who looked and felt like I did. We were very much anti-establishment non-conformists, and we looked the part. Back in the 80's it was not common to see people in combat boots and leather jackets with mohawks or shaved heads. Our very appearance invited people to ridicule and attack us.



Some of us decided we were not going to be passive about being picked on for how we dressed, the music we listened to, how we cut our hair, etc... so we started organizing into our skinhead crew and not taking shit off of the people in Baltimore City who fucked with us cause we were crazy kids from the suburbs, and not taking shit from the skins or punks from DC or NY who would come to Baltimore and terrorize us when we were younger.
I remember when I was a 15-16 punk rocker, that we would always be scared when the DC skins came up for shows because they would beat you up and steal your boots or your money, there was nothing really you could do about it. Who were you gonna call, a cop? Cops didn't care about dumb white kids from the suburbs being robbed in the city.

I remember a guy called "Mike Da Skin" from DC stole my little brother's leather biker jacket at a show. My brother was only 14 at the time and it was a total dick move on that guys part. For me, that was one of the final acts before I transformed. So my friends and I organized, we fought back, we got angry, really angry....we directed a lot of our anger at Nazi Skinheads because there started to be an issue with them trying to come and recruit people and push their white power shit....BALTIMORE DOES NOT PUT UP WITH THAT BULLSHIT!

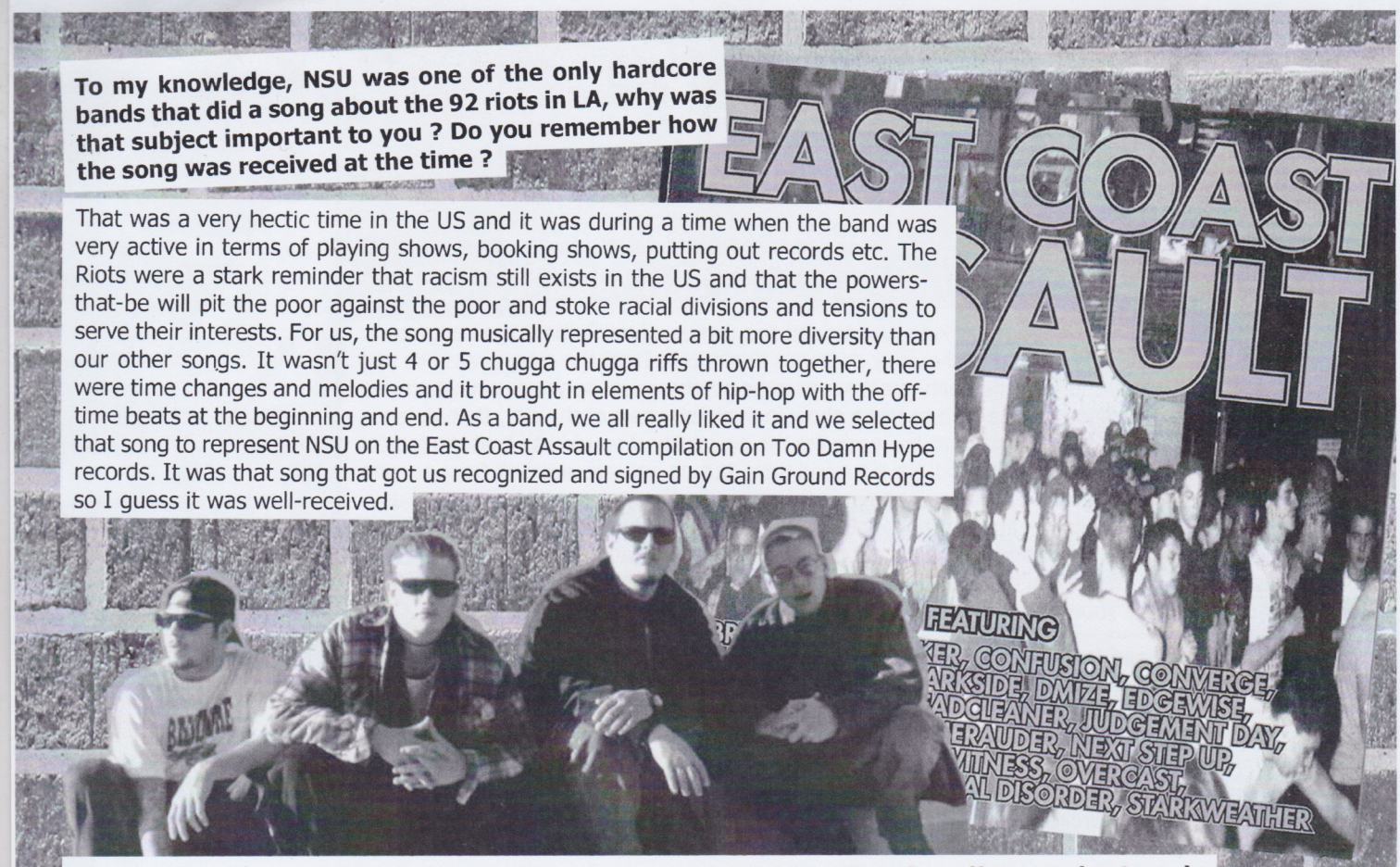
So the crew of friends evolved and caused major ruckus when we got together. We would regularly be fighting nazi crews every weekend when we were not going to shows. We made it known that Nazis could not come to shows or they would get a beat down. The same thing went for Skins or anyone else we didn't know who came around and tried to act like a hard ass.
Our friends started bands like Gut Instinct who wrote songs about all the crazy shit we would do every weekend with the CCS crew (Bats, Bottles, Bodies, Blood, Violence, Police, Billy Clubs...).

Gut Instinct was almost like the sound track to the life we were living hanging out on the streets of a hard city. Then, some of us from the CCS crew stared our own bands, like Next Step Up and Stout and a little later, The Dead End Boys. I guess other bands picked up on that vibe and ran with it.... Baltimore is a hard town, and it deserves hard music!

FALL FROM GRACE

To my knowledge, NSU was one of the only hardcore bands that did a song about the 92 riots in LA, why was that subject important to you ? Do you remember how the song was received at the time ?

That was a very hectic time in the US and it was during a time when the band was very active in terms of playing shows, booking shows, putting out records etc. The Riots were a stark reminder that racism still exists in the US and that the powers-that-be will pit the poor against the poor and stoke racial divisions and tensions to serve their interests. For us, the song musically represented a bit more diversity than our other songs. It wasn't just 4 or 5 chugga chugga riffs thrown together, there were time changes and melodies and it brought in elements of hip-hop with the off-time beats at the beginning and end. As a band, we all really liked it and we selected that song to represent NSU on the East Coast Assault compilation on Too Damn Hype records. It was that song that got us recognized and signed by Gain Ground Records so I guess it was well-received.



NSU always had a lot of particular drum patterns for hardcore (breaks, off-tempo beats, ...), which made your sound stand out, was that an intention for the start ? Does that also come from influences outside of hardcore ? Maybe funk or even Washington Go-go ?

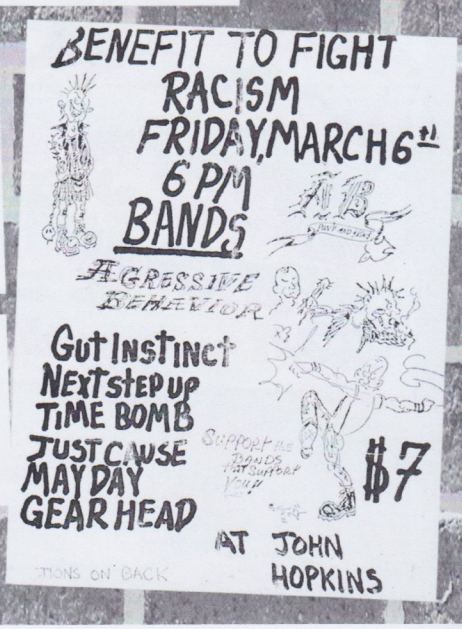
We have been very fortunate over the years to play with some amazing drummers. Our first drummer and long-time friend, Big Mike Kreller, is an old-school straight up drummer with great punk influenced fast parts and time changes. When he told us he could no longer do the band, we were all thinking we would never find another good drummer like him. We luckily were referred to a very young kid, Chad Rush, who was only 16 at the time but was a sick drummer. Chad recorded our first demo, second EP, and our 12" record, Heavy. Chad drummed in his school band and brought in syncopated drumming that is often found in marching band drum corps. He was really good at putting in fills and breaks for the beatdown parts. I remember always pushing him to add more China Crash to the breakdown parts,hahaha....

When Chad quit, we thought we would never find someone to replace him who could pull off all of the fills and rolls that he did but we got very lucky when we found Damon Stowell. I remember we had all heard about Damon from a friend of ours but no one knew his phone number. Like Chad, Damon was really young when he started jamming with us, only 16. Like Chad, Damon played drums in his school marching band and was really good at drum corps style. We found out Damon's address and me, Mike and Aaron all dressed in our flight jackets with shaved heads and doc martens showed up at his mom's house knocking on the door looking for him. Damon thought he was about to get beat up by skinheads when he saw us, hahaha. We told him, "we heard you know how to play the drums....wanna try out for NSU?"



That was almost 20 years ago and Damon has drummed on ever record since then. Damon is very much influenced by hip hop, funk, and go-go music, as you can hear in some of the beats and rhythms he plays. It was never part of some master plan we had that the drums would be such a prominent part of what we played but thankfully it worked out that way.

I think we would never have had the success we did without it because overall the music is very basic straight up hardcore – no fancy guitar solos, or sweeping melodies, just hard, basic, in-your-face chugga chugga hardcore, the drums make it something you want to smash people in the pit to....



You covered different bands such as Black Sabbath, Judge and of course Gut Instinct, and there is definitely an influence of these bands on your sound, especially in terms of heaviness and groove. Which other bands would you say were a big influence on NSU ?



Musically, each member of the band has the same basic foundation. We all love old school NYHC like Sick of it All, Killing Time, Sheer Terror, etc. But each of us also brought in other elements that we liked. For example, Aaron and Mike were really into metal also, particularly really sludgey heavy stuff like Winter, and Damon was into hip hop like WuTang. So we brought in elements of each of the styles to kind of pioneer what I guess would best be described as "beat down style" hardcore, which no one was really playing before us. There were other bands that came out not long after we started that also took that style and ran with it like Bulldoze, Hatebreed and All Out War.

I guess some bands that I can say really influenced us include Breakdown – I loved them before NSU and still to this day, Killing Time – we all loved the brutally hard style of the music and vocals and tried to replicate the anger, Napalm Death – I remember thinking Barney's voice was the epitome of hard and I wished I could scream that hard. Others included Crowbar, Judge, Underdog, Sheer Terror, Uppercut, and the old school NYHC bands.

On the first versions of Bloodstained Eyes you used a sample from Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Although I always thought that song was written from the point of view of an animal waiting to be slaughtered, but is it about the movie or is it more about animal killing ? Can you elaborate on the choice of the sample ?

The song is very much about animal slaughter and was inspired by some of Srila Prabhupada's writings on vegetarianism and spirituality. The song is from the viewpoint of an animal in a slaughterhouse being tortured and killed to support a diet that is not necessary for humans and only leads to the destruction of our planet. At the time it was written, me, Aaron, and Mike were going regularly to the Hare Krsna temple and were all vegetarians. I was a vegetarian long before that song was written and I am a vegan still today. In terms of the choice for the sample, we all really loved that movie Texas Chainsaw Massacre so we thought it was just a really cool sample first and foremost, and second it really fit the theme of the song.



I won't give in, I'm no possession,
Still in a constant struggle, passive aggression.

Similarly In Our World starts with a sample from the Goodfellas, would you like to elaborate on that ? Did some movies had an influence on your sound, in terms of atmosphere maybe ? What are some of your favourite movies ?

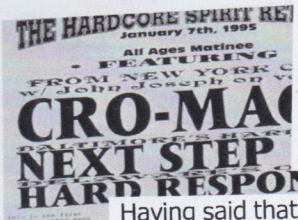
We all were really into watching horror and gangster movies growing up. Good Fellas was such a dope movie that we really wanted to add some samples from it to the record. Our music seemed for better or worse to have a negative outlook or view on a lot of things that made us pissed off about society and the world. I suppose that as angry youth who were disenchanted with the world and growing up and starting to see through the lies that the media, society, and our families build up, we started to rebel against it all.

What represents rebellion against society more than anti-social gangsters who break the law? I guess that's why we really dug Good Fellas. In the sample that serves as the intro for In Our World, you hear Robert DeNero's character ask Joe Pesci's character when the 'kid' Spider back talks him, " Are you gonna let this fucking punk get away with that? What's this world coming to?" Then Joe Pesci's character shoots Spider and replies "that's what the fucking world is coming to. How do you like that?!" What a great intro to a song that describes how fucked up the world seems to be from the view point of angry teenagers....

We also used samples from other gangster movies on other records like Menace to Society as an intro to Doorstep of the Nation.... What movies do I like? I like just about any kind of movies except for romance and romantic comedies. Give me action, comedy, adventure, and sci-fi and I will watch for hours...some of my favorites include: Above The Law and other Steven Segal movies, Caddy Shack, Space Balls, Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Full Metal Jacket, and old spaghetti westerns with Clint Eastwood like Fist Full of Dollars, Good The Bad and The Ugly, and Hang em High.

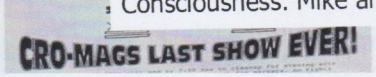
Passive Aggression

Where does the name Next Step Up comes from ? Is that a Krishna reference ? Some of the songs have a Krisha content to the lyrics (Nishinga, Cursors Of The Light, Nothing ...), were you, and are you still Krishna ? What does that represents to you ?



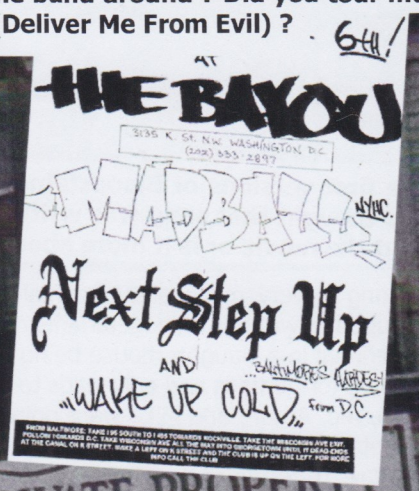
The name Next Step Up came from pulling the name from a hat. The founding members wrote a bunch of names down that they were considering and put them on pieces of paper in a hat. Next Step Up was pulled out and selected as the band name. It does not have any relationship to Krishna Consciousness per se. Next Step Up was never supposed to be any particular kind of band other than just a heavy-ass hardcore band. People think that the name might be related to straight edge or Krishna or something else, but it was never intentional.

Having said that, I personally am a follower of Srila Prabhupada's teachings and consider myself to be Krishna Conscious even thoughI have never been an initiated devotee living in a temple. When the band first started, Aaron and Mike were also into Krishna Consciousness and we all used to go to the ISKCON temple on Sunday's for their free vegetarian feasts and lectures. Because I'm a Krishna and I wrote most of the songs, some of them have a strong sentiment of Krishna Consciousness. Mike and Aaron no longer go to the temple or follow Krishna Consciousness teachings but I still do.

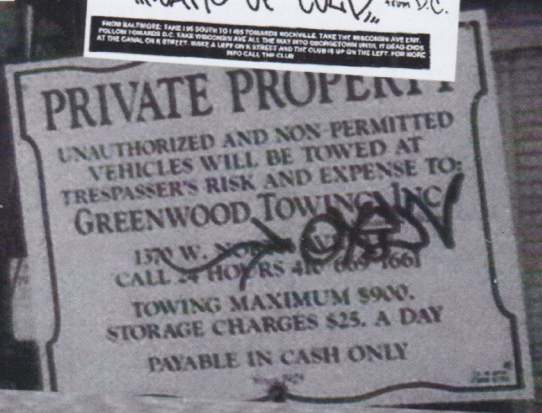


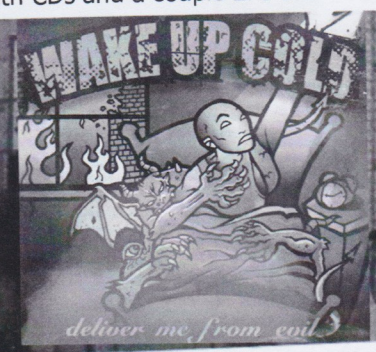
How did NSU end and how did you start Wake Up Cold ? How long was the band around ? Did you tour much ? How did you end up releasing an EP on Inner Rage Records from France (Deliver Me From Evil) ?

After many years of booking shows, playing shows, touring etc, the members of the band all decided to take a break from NSU to pursue other projects and life interests. Some members had kids and got married and others did other side projects that ended up becoming more a full time gig than we originally intended. NSU never officially broke up. Not long after we got back from our first Euro tour with 25 ta Life and Hard Response, we took a long break because Mike our founding guitar player had a kid and got married and didn't have the time to do the band anymore. We decided a year or so later to get back together without Mike, with Bruce on guitar to record and do more touring. That incarnation of NSU recorded the Breaking Point EP on Gain Ground Records, went to Japan in 1998, and did lots of shows during the late 90's and into early 2000.



Then in 2000 Aaron, Damon and Bruce decided to do a side project called Downtime – Bruce and Damon also did Together We Fall. Around that same time, the guys in Wake Up Cold approached me because they were looking for a singer. I agreed to try out for them since they were friends of mine. It turns out that we had a great chemistry and loved playing together, so we went from a side project to putting out a couple full length CDs and a couple EPs and 7" records.





Wake Up Cold even did a Euro tour with our Dutch brothers in No Turning Back. Wake Up Cold put out our first CD, Rise From the Ash, on Gain Ground Records, Next Step Up's record label. We had a falling out with Gain Ground Records and decided to put out an EP called Every Day on a Japanese label, Support Independent Hardcore (SIH) records.

When it came time for us to put out our next full length record, Deliver Me From Evil, we decided that the best approach would be for us to own the rights to the music and license the CD to different labels in different countries. In the US we put it out on DFF Records and in Japan on Out Ta Bomb. I was looking for a good Euro label to work with and reached out to my friend Jean Marc from Inner Rage, who was very interested. I met Jean Marc back in the early 90's while touring with NSU and we kept in touch over the years. Jean Marc is a legend in the French hardcore scene and an amazing person :).

I know you toured Japan in the 90's with NSU, but you recently returned there for another tour. How was that important to you to go back there after the recent tragedy that affected the country ? How were the shows ? Anything you would like to add ?

That's right, NSU did our first tour of Japan in 98 and we had such a great time and played so many great shows that we spent the better part of a decade trying to find a way to go back there. Back then, before the internet, I had been trading letters with some kids from Japan who knew NSU and we would share CDs and video tapes of Japanese hardcore bands and US bands. We didn't know whether we had any kind of following there or not, just a few letters from kids who would write us.

When we got to Japan for the first show, The Few Da Real Fest, we were shocked that there were 800 people there and they all went nuts for us when we played and later after the show they all wanted our autographs. It was very surreal for us because we were not used to that kind of attention. We met a lot of great bands and really great people who took us in, drove hours to see all the shows, gave us presents, took us to eat, etc etc. When I met the kids I had been trading letters with at some of the shows, I was surprised to find out that they didn't speak English.

I realized that the language barrier would become a major problem that ended up being the reason we didn't go back for so long. We could not find and communicate with any promoters there to book tours and the company who took is there in 98, Japan Overseas, stopped booking tours. Then in 2008/2009 timeframe, I met the guys from the Osaka hardcore band Sand. Sand was invited to play the Black n Blue bowl in NYC with my friends from Stout. Stout got them on a show with them in Baltimore the day after the BnB Bowl. After the Baltimore show was over, we took the guys from Sand to an after party in the warehouse where the band I was jamming with at the time, Unyoung Heroes, practiced.

At the party, one of the guys who spoke English with Sand heard that I was the singer from NSU and told the other guys in Sand. As it turns out, NSU was a major inspiration to Sand; and lots of other Japanese hardcore bands too. None of the guys in NSU knew it, but apparently, when we toured Japan in the 90's we impacted a lot of kids who ended up starting bands that sounded like NSU. They call it Villany-style hardcore...Anyway, the singer of Sand, Makoto, has a record label and said he would be interested in helping to bring NSU back to Japan and in putting out a 20 Year Anniversary CD.

In the middle of planning for the tour, Japan was hit with the Tsunami that devastated large parts of the country. I felt really horrible and wanted to do something, anything, to help. I talked to Makoto about how the people in the US and Euro hardcore scenes might be able to help and we decided to put together a hardcore benefit compilation.

Working with Makoto and some other people from around the world like, Ed from Goodlife, Axel from Filled With Hate, Rico from Hardcore Helps Foundation, and Martijn from Stronger Bookings and NTB, we put together a 35-band 2-disc DIY compilation with all bands donating profits to 2 members of the Japanese hardcore community who were working with victims to help better their lives. The CD is called Unite for Relief – A Hardcore Benefit for Japan and has tons of great bands including NSU, Bet The Devil, Madball, Wisdom in Chains, Trapped Under Ice, No Turning Back, Sand, Numb, For the Glory, and lots more.

The 2011 Japan tour we did was amazing. We had great responses from lots of people who had seen us on tour back in the 90s who came out to hang with us, take us to parties, and make us feel at home. We played some great shows in Tokyo, Osaka, Mie, Kagoshima, and Sendai, where the Tsunami hit hardest.

The tour ended with us playing the Freestyle Outro fest in Osaka that included all kinds of crazy bands from hardcore to metal to hip hop, with an area for Skateboard half pipe, motorcycle jumping, graffiti, DJs, dance crew competitions and more...like almost 10,000 people in attendance it was off the hook. Makoto from Sand has a clothing company called Afterbase and him and his friends booked and sponsored the event.

Makoto is like the king of Osaka and treated us very nicely. He arranged tours of cultural places for us, got us interviews with magazines and TV shows, got us free clothing and tattoos and was just and amazing host and friend to the band. We are working on doing a short summer tour of the US with Sand and Lifeless this August...

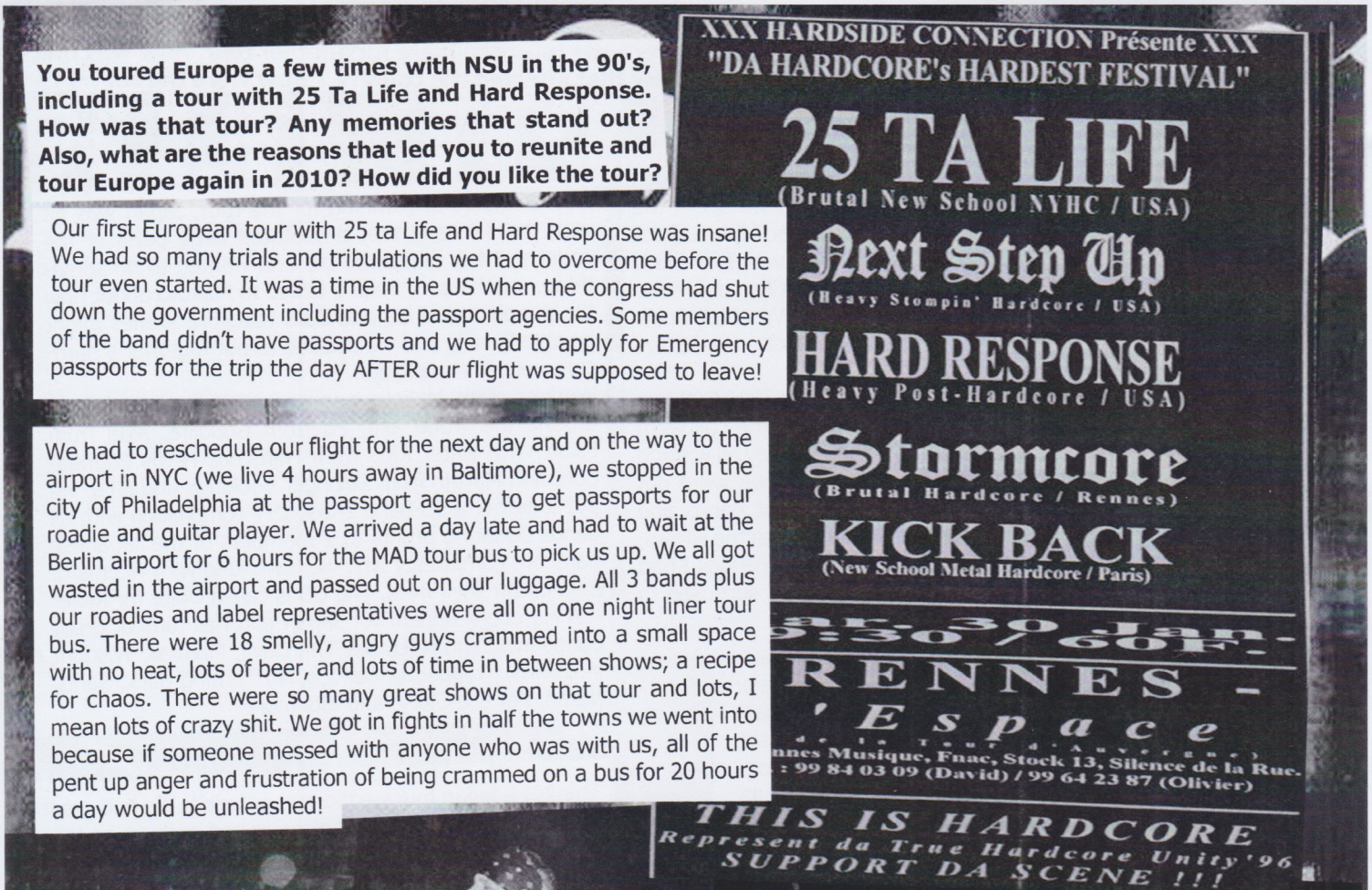




You toured Europe a few times with NSU in the 90's, including a tour with 25 Ta Life and Hard Response. How was that tour? Any memories that stand out? Also, what are the reasons that led you to reunite and tour Europe again in 2010? How did you like the tour?

Our first European tour with 25 ta Life and Hard Response was insane! We had so many trials and tribulations we had to overcome before the tour even started. It was a time in the US when the congress had shut down the government including the passport agencies. Some members of the band didn't have passports and we had to apply for Emergency passports for the trip the day AFTER our flight was supposed to leave!

We had to reschedule our flight for the next day and on the way to the airport in NYC (we live 4 hours away in Baltimore), we stopped in the city of Philadelphia at the passport agency to get passports for our roadie and guitar player. We arrived a day late and had to wait at the Berlin airport for 6 hours for the MAD tour bus to pick us up. We all got wasted in the airport and passed out on our luggage. All 3 bands plus our roadies and label representatives were all on one night liner tour bus. There were 18 smelly, angry guys crammed into a small space with no heat, lots of beer, and lots of time in between shows; a recipe for chaos. There were so many great shows on that tour and lots, I mean lots of crazy shit. We got in fights in half the towns we went into because if someone messed with anyone who was with us, all of the pent up anger and frustration of being crammed on a bus for 20 hours a day would be unleashed!



One of the best and most memorable gigs was playing a big festival in Belgium with Kickback that our friend JF Fluery from Existence of Hate booked. There were tons of great people, great bands, great beers, and killer mosh pits and sing alongs. I met lots of great Euro kids who I'm still friends with today. We reunited and returned to Europe in 2010 after some time off to pursue other side projects – me with Wake Up Cold, Bruce did Dying Fetus, Misery Index and Covenance, Aaron did Hell to Pay, and Damon was doing Charm City Saints. Also, I had recently divorced and found that I could now spend my summer vacation time touring with the band instead of doing family travels with my ex-wife and her family.

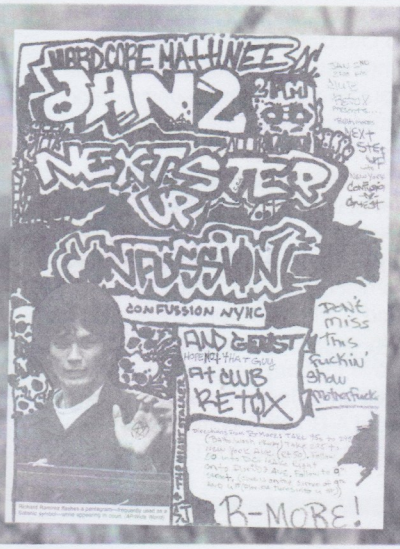


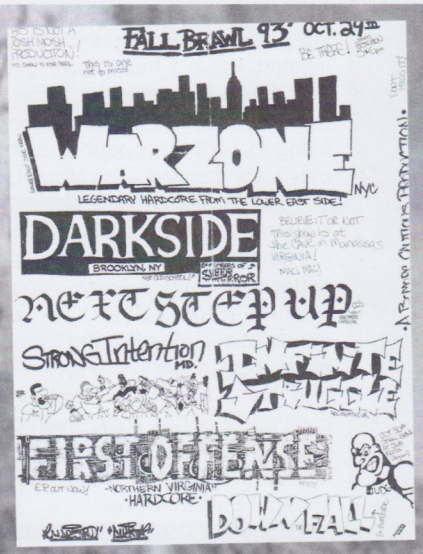
For the 2010 tour, we enlisted the help of our friend, the legendary, Scotty "P" Powers from Stout, Iron Cross, and Slumlords to fill in on the drums. The 2010 tour was set up by our good friend Martijn from Stronger Bookings and No Turning Back. He did a great job of getting us on lots of great shows like Sucks N Summer Fest and Ieper Fest. We also had an AWESOME tour driver, Emile from State of Mind, so we had lots of great road stories to share. We really loved that last tour; it was by far the best Euro tour for NSU and we hope to one day repeat it!



After all those years in the hardcore scene, give me one or two bands that you think were really overlooked and underestimated ?

Wow, that's a really hard one man! I will bring my Baltimore bias into this equation and say that while some Baltimore bands got some respect, I think too many people slept on Gut Instinct and still to this day too many people are sleeping (bitch) on Stout, one of Baltimore's hardest! Expanding past Baltimore, I'd have to say Darkside NYC was an awesome band that too many people overlooked along with Confusion – both NYC bands that NSU played with a bunch back in the day and with whom I'm still friends with today. Darkside is getting ready to put out a new double LP and Confusion is going to reunite and play some shows too....
DON'T SLEEP ON THESE BANDS!!







How did Bet The Devil start? This band has quite a death metal vibe to it, what are some of your mains influences? Do you have any plans for it? Or is it more to have fun jamming and playing around your area?

Bet the Devil started when a street punk/Oi band that I was in called Unyoung Heroes was coming to an end. Unyoung Heroes had Big Mike Kreller the original NSU drummer and Mike Knauer on guitar. Towards the end of the band, Mike Knauer and I were writing songs that were much more metal than what the other guys in Unyoung Heroes wanted to play. Big Mike moved out of state and our bass player left so rather than trying to replace those members, me and Mike Knauer said, "hey, we should start a metal band!"I reached out to Matt Maben who was the original drummer for Darkest Hour and who had played drums in my other band Wake Up Cold for our Europe tour and who had been a roadie for NSU when we did our 2001 Euro tour.
I also reached out to Aaron from NSU because I knew he wasn't doing any bands at the time and that he loved metal and was good friends with Mike and Matt. Matt suggested we include our mutual friend Chuck Collins from Trephine to give the band a 'stoner rock' influence and we took off from there.

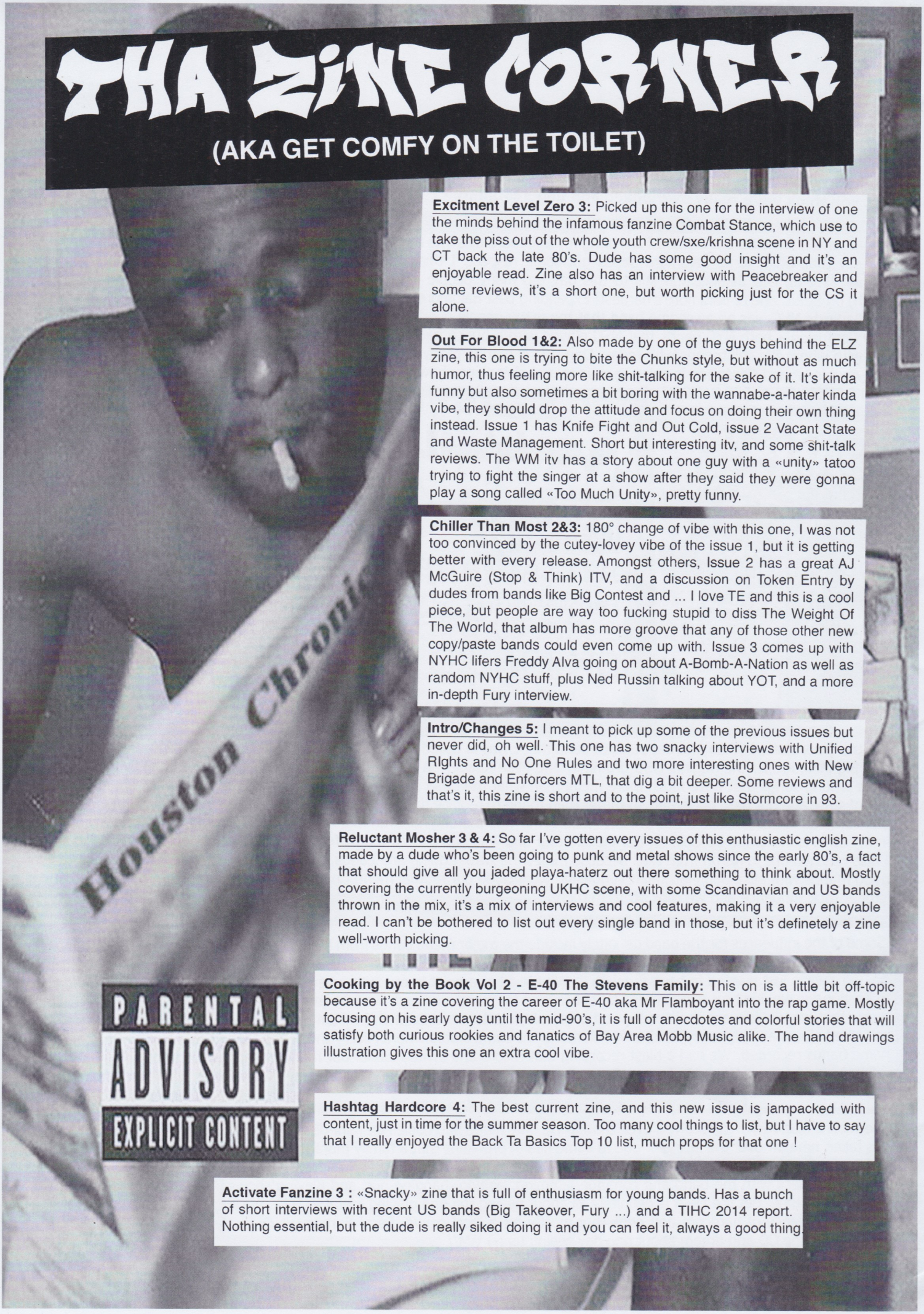
Some of the influences for the band definitely include the major metal bands from the 80's and 90's like Slayer and Testament, and even some of the feel of old Black Sabbath with the tuning and sound of some of the guitars. As far as plans for the band go, we always just wanted to have fun with it. We are all at a point in our lives where we have family obligations and work obligations so we don't have the time to be out touring for months on end. We just enjoy each other's company, enjoy creating music that we would want to listen to, and enjoy playing the occasional show from time to time. We recorded a full length, self-titled album at Wrightway Studios in Baltimore, the same studio where Misery Index and Dying Fetus along with other big name bands recorded. We had a blast recording that record and invited lots of our friends to appear on it including on guitar – Sparky Voyles from Misery Index and Dying Fetus, and on vocals Mark and Jason from Misery Index, Jon from Dying Fetus, and TAD from Stout.

The record was very well-received even though we only made 500 copies on mini-disc. The band has taken time off over the last year due to some health problems that a family member of one of guitar players was experiencing. We hope that the situation will resolve itself and he will have the time to get back with the band and continue jamming, writing, hanging out, and playing shows from time to time. Bet the Devil is definitely all about having fun and playing metal as fuck music with the influence of hardcore and punk, but mostly for a local crowd. Sorry Europe, you'll just have to buy the CD and dream about one day seeing us :-) \\M//

HEAVY HEAVY HEAVY HEAVY HEAVY HEAVY HEAVY HEAVY

THA ZINE CORNER

(AKA GET COMFY ON THE TOILET)



Excitment Level Zero 3: Picked up this one for the interview of one the minds behind the infamous fanzine Combat Stance, which use to take the piss out of the whole youth crew/sxe/krishna scene in NY and CT back the late 80's. Dude has some good insight and it's an enjoyable read. Zine also has an interview with Peacebreaker and some reviews, it's a short one, but worth picking just for the CS it alone.

Out For Blood 1&2: Also made by one of the guys behind the ELZ zine, this one is trying to bite the Chunks style, but without as much humor, thus feeling more like shit-talking for the sake of it. It's kinda funny but also sometimes a bit boring with the wannabe-a-hater kinda vibe, they should drop the attitude and focus on doing their own thing instead. Issue 1 has Knife Fight and Out Cold, issue 2 Vacant State and Waste Management. Short but interesting itv, and some shit-talk reviews. The WM itv has a story about one guy with a «unity» tatoo trying to fight the singer at a show after they said they were gonna play a song called «Too Much Unity», pretty funny.

Chiller Than Most 2&3: 180° change of vibe with this one, I was not too convinced by the cutey-lovey vibe of the issue 1, but it is getting better with every release. Amongst others, Issue 2 has a great AJ McGuire (Stop & Think) ITV, and a discussion on Token Entry by dudes from bands like Big Contest and ... I love TE and this is a cool piece, but people are way too fucking stupid to diss The Weight Of The World, that album has more groove that any of those other new copy/paste bands could even come up with. Issue 3 comes up with NYHC lifers Freddy Alva going on about A-Bomb-A-Nation as well as random NYHC stuff, plus Ned Russin talking about YOT, and a more in-depth Fury interview.

Intro/Changes 5: I meant to pick up some of the previous issues but never did, oh well. This one has two snacky interviews with Unified RIghts and No One Rules and two more interesting ones with New Brigade and Enforcers MTL, that dig a bit deeper. Some reviews and that's it, this zine is short and to the point, just like Stormcore in 93.

Reluctant Mosher 3 & 4: So far I've gotten every issues of this enthusiastic english zine, made by a dude who's been going to punk and metal shows since the early 80's, a fact that should give all you jaded playa-haterz out there something to think about. Mostly covering the currently burgeoning UKHC scene, with some Scandinavian and US bands thrown in the mix, it's a mix of interviews and cool features, making it a very enjoyable read. I can't be bothered to list out every single band in those, but it's definetely a zine well-worth picking.

PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT

Cooking by the Book Vol 2 - E-40 The Stevens Family: This on is a little bit off-topic because it's a zine covering the career of E-40 aka Mr Flamboyant into the rap game. Mostly focusing on his early days until the mid-90's, it is full of anecdotes and colorful stories that will satisfy both curious rookies and fanatics of Bay Area Mobb Music alike. The hand drawings illustration gives this one an extra cool vibe.

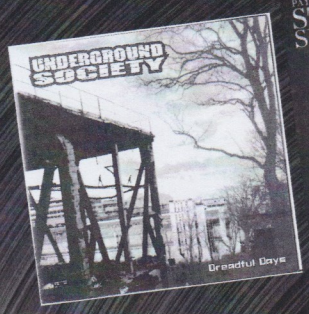
Hashtag Hardcore 4: The best current zine, and this new issue is jampacked with content, just in time for the summer season. Too many cool things to list, but I have to say that I really enjoyed the Back Ta Basics Top 10 list, much props for that one !

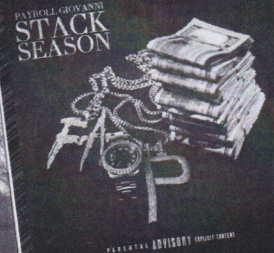
Activate Fanzine 3 : «Snacky» zine that is full of enthusiasm for young bands. Has a bunch of short interviews with recent US bands (Big Takeover, Fury ...) and a TIHC 2014 report. Nothing essential, but the dude is really siked doing it and you can feel it, always a good thing.

PLAYLISTS

FRED

Underground Society - Dreadful Days: Underrated gem of 90's style french metallic hardcore, plenty of groove and hard parts. KDS Crew Represent !



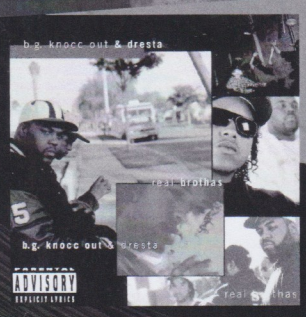


Payroll Giovanni - Stack Season: Pretty cool mixtape from ex-hustler-turned-rapper-producer Payroll, reminiscent of both '94 and 98' era No-Limit, served with a cold Detroit twist.

Zero Tolerance - Live In Toronto 89: From a show where they shared the bill with fellow Buffalo bands Cannibal Corpse & The Goo-Goo Dolls (!!!), it's a prime exemple of their style of hard stompin'core.
«A minute to prey and a second to die !»







B.G. Knocc Out & Dresta - Real Brothas : Nothing says summer like a good ole 90's G-Funk album, and this one is just the perfect shit to bounce around for the season.

THANK YOU'S

Patrick & XRepentanceX,
Kasper & Redemption Denied,
Jr Glass & Next Step Up

NICO

Technical Itch - Seed Of Design: Bristol based producer brings drum & bass to the next level. Pure evilness, this new release sounds like a come-back to the older stuffs he produced in the past, and that's a great thing! If you wanna discover techstep, go ahead with this producer because he's the God of the genre and has a unique sound identity.



Dieselboy - ProjectHUMAN: Deep and dark Drum & Bass fon this compilation by NY-veteran Dieselboy. Just like in hardcore, the shittier the name, the better the music. Some of the tracks are some of the heaviest D&B I've heard.

Breakdown - Demo 87: Probably no need to introduce this band, otherwise you need to stop pretending being hardcore! Anyway, this album (along with Dissed & Dismissed and Battle Hymns) is often, if not always, in my playlist.





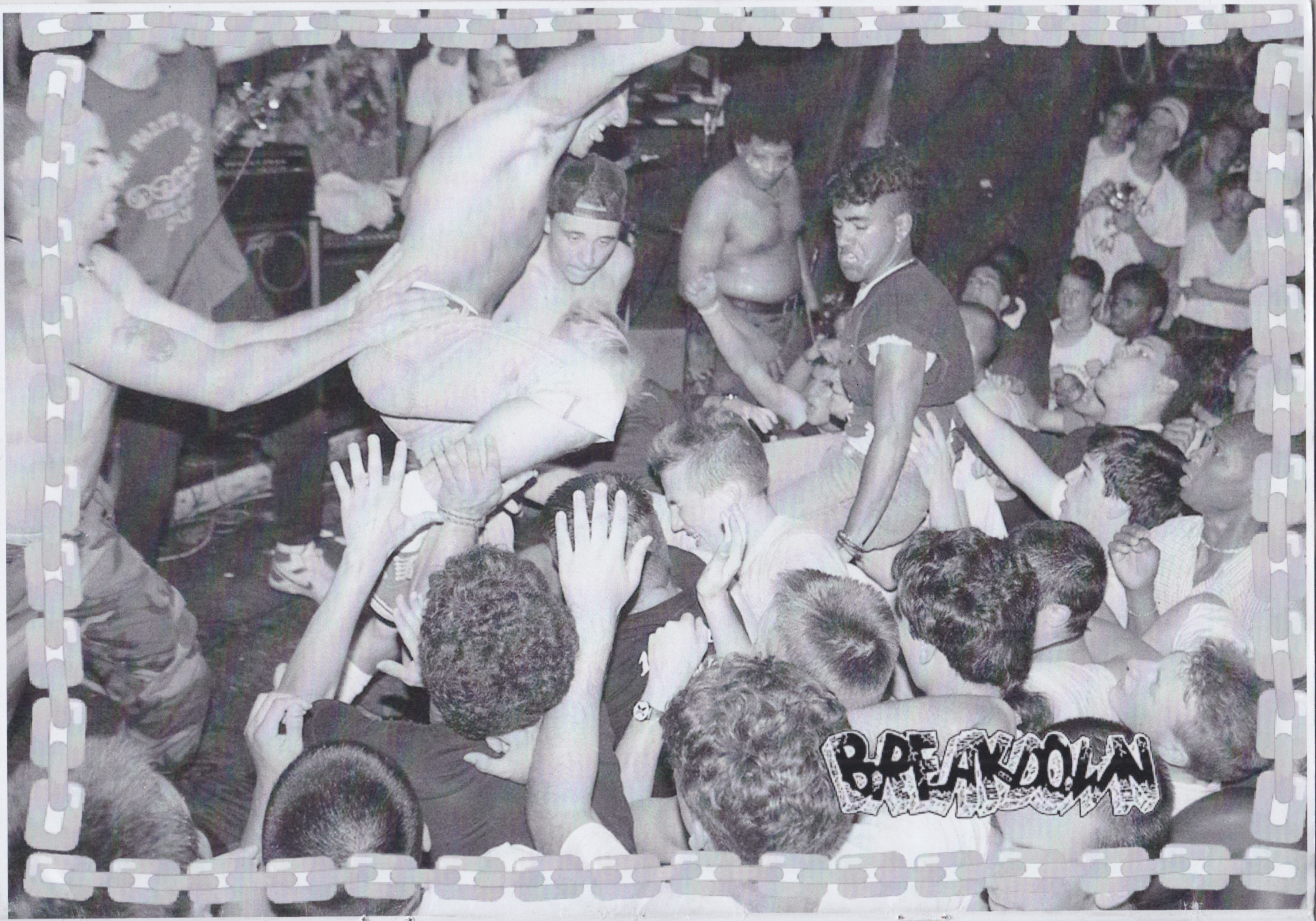
Shxcxchcxsh – Linear S Decoded: What a name! Seems like Swedish duo Shxcxchcxsh (pronounce it ch-ch-ch) found the perfect name to get out of the mass. Techno music with 90s electronic influences like Casino Vs Japan, and make it really well. Some tracks are heavier, some more atmospheric, and all in all the album is balanced and harmonious.

CREDITS

Interviews & Layout : Fred & Nico aka
The Gutter Groove Crew

Photos : Google Search

Front Cover : Amadeo «Seko» Da Silva


BREAKDOWN